



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



THE
ST. JAMES'S MAGAZINE

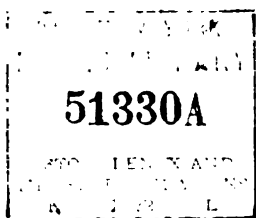


DECEMBER TO MARCH.

VOL. XVIII.

DONATED BY THE
MARQUANTILL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION
NEW YORK CITY

LONDON :



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
ACROSS ROSS-SHIRE	43
About to be Married	379
Alexander Smith	450
American Boarding-Houses	353
Banker's Ward, The	307
Bucolic and Canine Recollections	52, 187
Carbonari, The	251
Christmas visit to the Table Mountain, A	61
"Cut Up"	347
Great Riot in New York, The	409
Ice Cone at Montmorenci, The	179
LIFE'S MYSTERY, A	1, 129, 257, 385
LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU	76, 164, 295, 461
London Newsboys	246
Lord Lytton as a Poet	497
M. Du Chaillu in Equatorial Africa	473
OUT OF CHARITY	97, 202, 313, 425
POEMS:—	
Bachelor's Reverie, A	508
Broken Hearted, The	199
Embroidery	244

Ride in Queensland, A	365
Rousseau the Dreamer	32
Scandinavian Ballad Poetry	285
Songs and Ballads of Lancashire	420
The Truth, The Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth . . .	373



A LIFE'S MYSTERY

BY CLINTON HOPE

CHAPTER X.

A GLIMPSE OF THE MYSTERY.

OWEN ARNOLD, before leaving Sedgley Hall, had an interview with Sir Shenton, when he informed him of Liliás's refusal of his offer (which was no deviation from the truth), begging him at the same time, as she had earnestly requested, to let the matter rest. It was somewhat reluctantly the baronet consented to comply with this petition, for being much distressed at the failure of his darling scheme, he thought he should at least have the consolation of bewailing it aloud. And, by-the-bye, in minor troubles, to talk of them is an excellent specific for their cure.

It had been, as already stated, his wish from the time Liliás was an infant and Owen luxuriated in paletots and turn-down collars, that they should be ultimately united; and the disappointment of his long-cherished desire was exceedingly grievous to him. He was, however, forced to content himself with reiterated expressions of friendship for young Arnold, and with a certain vague fancy, stowed away in the farthest recesses of his heart, that Owen might become his son-in-law yet. He neglected to recall, in the pleasure of castle-building, the terror his daughter had once displayed upon this self-same subject, and was filled with regret that Arnold's regiment departed so soon, before even one step could be made towards the progress of the suit, which the baronet settled in his own mind must prove successful in vanquishing Liliás's repugnance to the holy state of matrimony. In his opinion the declaration had been made too suddenly. It was not to be expected, he reasoned, that a girl should know her own mind without due

reflection; and, besides this, he had ever maintained the profoundest faith, not in the unchangeableness of the female heart, but in its constant alteration of opinion; believing that the despised admirer of to-day may become the adored of to-morrow, and the loved of the immediate present the detestation of the early future.

How far the baronet's judgment of woman's inconsistency is to be relied on, I will not take upon myself to decide; though in Liliass certainly were many of the irreconcilables of her sex to be found. Yet not entirely were the fluctuations of her soul owing to the fickleness either of her individual or common nature; much that at first sight appeared inconsistent with her character was but the development of childhood sentiments to those of mature growth.

During the last six months she had become a woman in thought and action. The friendship for Ada Hartop, which had once been the mainspring of her existence, was faded now; but this was not to be attributed to want of stability. Girlish habits and friendships change as naturally as the fashion of their attire, and though her expanded heart opened itself to other and more steadfast attachments, she still experienced a warm regard for her old school-fellow, with whom she kept up as free a correspondence as the jealous surveillance of Misses Magendie over their pupils' letters, both written and received, permitted.

To Owen Arnold she gave credit for being not merely pleasing in manner, but ingenuous and noble in disposition, and as with her no good quality failed of being duly appreciated—even when marred by awkwardness or associated with gross failings—it was impossible for her to withhold a tribute of esteem from her father's favourite. The misfortune was that Owen was too amiable, and Liliass too conscious of his excellences. In this lay the cause of her frequently distant bearing towards him, which could not always disguise her preference. Why, as she was near loving him, she rejected his love with such unkindness, and at the last held out to him so poor an encouragement, could be made clear only by herself. Throughout her life she presented in both word and deed an unravelable enigma to all who knew her.

She might proclaim her disbelief in affection, and really imagine herself incredulous concerning that holiest bond of human interests, but the germ of the passion was in her breast, waiting only for the sunshine of happiness to draw out, or the chilly blasts of misery to uncover.

Owen had been gone nearly a month, and Christmas, with its delightful bustle and hearty jollity, was near. Possibly Miss Bellamy was too much engaged in superintending the preparations

for the forthcoming season of festivity to grieve much over the young man's absence; however that might be, she assuredly was less nervously fidgetty when she heard he had set off, and would not probably return for more than a year. Certainly it was a long time to contemplate not seeing the man to whom she thought she might in time to come bear the near title of wife; but then this was not quite sure, and if she did miss him more than she expected, she could not be said to be in *love* with him.

It wanted just a week to Christmas Day, and Lilius was busy packing a hamper, destined for her old nurse, Sarah King. She was in the morning-room with Dr. Darby, who had of late become as constant a visitor at the Hall as his professional duties would permit of.

It may seem strange that, although Lilius truly respected the doctor, she dreaded his society—and yet not without reason. She knew by her own acute powers of discernment that the worthy physician was an excellent reader of character and motive, and feared lest, in an unguarded moment, a look, a word, a movement of alarm or impatience might reveal to him that she was the owner of a fatal secret. Before him she felt as an open book, whose contents at will he might make his own. But notwithstanding the terrors these ideas occasioned, oftentimes, during the dull autumn and winter weather, she was pleased, despite herself, with the boon of his companionship. There was such a hearty reality in his laugh, it was worth a whole year's careful dieting and physicing to have a chat with him; and then there was so honest a meaning in all his actions and expressions, that it was next to impossible not to feel your soul warm towards him. Eccentric, and even opinionated, he might be, but his disposition was so genial, so kindly and sincere, you were constrained to overlook the peculiarities which in another person would have been classed as objections.

Upon the particular morning of which I am speaking, Lilius was more than commonly thoughtful; and all the time she was engaged in arranging the choice winter fruits, and a few bottles of Sir Shenton's oldest port, together with other seasonable presents for her humble friend, she did not once open her lips. Lilius never prohibited the doctor from smoking, and having received a smiling assent now, he puffed away at his cigar with a puzzled air, casting, at intervals, keen glances from beneath his lowered brow at his companion, and wondering with all his might what could make her so silent.

Continually, despite his presence, the young lady's hands would cease from their occupation, and fall negligently by her side, while her expression partook of that vacuity which accompanies complete mental abstraction.

"What can it be that so engages her mind?" ruminated Dr. Darby, upon whom her heaviness had at length produced a corresponding seriousness.

"May I inquire the subject of your meditations?" he asked, playfully, but with alarming abruptness, after a few moments spent in earnest watchfulness of her face.

She started, and confusedly gave a trifling reply, which she followed up by some commonplace remark, intended for the double purpose of diverting both her interrogator and herself from further questioning and moodiness.

Her efforts, however, to maintain a conversation were unsuccessful; involuntarily she relapsed into reverie, leaving him at leisure to speculate more deeply with regard to her peculiar behaviour. The next awakening from apathy was caused by the doctor opening the subject of her health. This roused her immediately, and with an ill-concealed uneasiness she listened to his comments, carefully avoiding to meet his eyes, whose usual merry twinkle was changed to painful gravity.

She had completed her task of stocking the hamper, and seated herself opposite Dr. Darby, who, forsaking his lounging position, cast aside his cigar with an exclamation of disgust, seldom elicited from the inveterate smoker, save when a troublesome doubt as to the foreign manufacture of the weed crossed his brain.

"Yes, you have been, and are still very ill," he said, "notwithstanding your protestations to the contrary; you cannot deceive me, though you may your father: you forget that I am a physician."

The words were simple enough, and appeared hardly to render necessary the intentness of gaze that accompanied them, or the significance of tone in which they were uttered; neither, too, would one fancy them calculated to occasion any great perturbation in the person addressed; yet so it was that, as the doctor slowly enunciated them, his penetrating eyes looking the while full into Lilius's orbs, they fell beneath the scrutiny. The pinky hue of her complexion paled to a sickly white, her lips quivered with an unuttered moan, her hands fell listlessly upon her lap, and she fell back in her seat. A terrible meaning had been conveyed to her by that searching gaze and intonation, and for the first time in her life she had fainted.

"Poor, poor girl, such a mere child too!" murmured the doctor compassionately; "I did not think it would have so great an effect upon her: but she will soon recover."

And so she did; not two minutes elapsed before the flickering lids opened, and she glanced around. The natural tint of her cheek partially returned, but she shuddered violently, and in her face was a look startled and startling.

Slowly she rose from her seat and, staggering towards the doctor, convulsively caught hold of his coat sleeve. Her eyes were wildly prayerful in their expression, and her voice choked with emotion.

"Doctor, for God's sake," she cried, "do not reveal what you have discovered! Have pity, I implore, I entreat you, and do not betray me!"

Her frantic energy could hold out no longer; her grasp relaxed, the room swam before her sight, and she seemed again about to faint. She had not lost consciousness though, and when Dr. Darby assisted her to a chair, she heard distinctly his sorrowful answer.

"Heaven forbid that I should add one drop to the draught of misery prepared for you. With me you are safe; look to it that you are equally so with others."

With this he left her—left her alone, with the crushing humiliation of a secret that drew between her and the rest of the sisterhood a black line of demarcation, never to be crossed or blotted out. Alone she remained for more than an hour, writhing under the bitter consciousness of her dependence upon the doctor, whom, though she trusted, she nevertheless feared—trusted for his honour, feared for the depth of his penetration.

CHAPTER XI.

A NEWSPAPER PARAGRAPH.

CHRISTMAS at length arrived with its usual concomitants of guests and revelry, and every available portion of the mansion was made to do service. Constant freights of guests and luggage were disgorged at the Hall door by vehicles of wonderful variety, from the rumbling ancient curricule, to the modern brougham, glorying in the newest invention for the promotion of ease.

Dandy valets and dainty ladies' maids were, for the nonce, compelled to make sleeping-chambers of the mouldy rooms at the very top of the house, all the more commodious ones being occupied by their masters and mistresses. Innumerable contrivances for stretching the stone walls had been made, as if they were so much India-rubber; but it would not do, and more guests than had arrived by the twenty-fourth of December could not by the most ingenious devices have been packed into the already overflowing house.

This unusually large assemblage of visitors was invited by the generous baronet in special honour of his daughter, who, truth to tell, evinced by no means a grateful spirit upon the occasion; and though she kissed her father repeatedly, assuring him that she appreciated his endeavours to make her happy, she was very far from being so.

From the first mention of the visitors a cloud more impenetrable hung over her fair brow, and impatience and vexation alone marked her anticipations of the coming festivities.

The guests had come for the week and, to all appearance, with the intent of passing the time with the utmost enjoyment.

Foxhunting squires, and ambitious youngsters who affected a love of the chase, inundated the stables with their horses, and Sir Shenton's disused, but well-appointed, kennels with their dogs; and the ladies—heaven bless them!—who never will be behind hand in the expense of their pleasures—brought into requisition not only the closets and landings, but even some of the cellars, for the disposal of their formidable trunks and packages, filled with costly silks, laces, and jewellery, to be worn upon the occasion of the different balls that, during this memorable week, were to be honoured with their attendance.

There was the uncompromising, port-loving old gentleman, who voted progress, political and social, a curse, and made antiquity the test of virtue in all things; and in distinction to him were youths bursting with ideas of the world's regeneration, which they confidently trusted was their mission to bring about. My Lord Marquis, courtly and gouty, but with no other particular mark of his rank. Matrons, scarcely less fair in their matured bloom than in budding youth. An elderly spinster, who declared men, one and all, to be base deceivers, but who, in the spring of her self-isolated life, had been ready to believe them demigods. Girls, pretty and passable, giddy and sedate, each carrying in her breast a world of unfledged hopes, some, alas! to be crushed as soon as they took wing.

Amongst this startling galaxy of beauty, bravery, and fashion, was Ada Hartop, who, being now in the full enjoyment of her vacation, had rapturously availed herself of Lillias's invitation to spend a week at the Hall.

Happy, blushing, Ada was rather frightened at the idea of meeting so many strangers, and secretly expected to congeal in the polite frigidity of the *élite* circle; but this did not prevent her from coming; for, added to the desire of seeing her still fondly-loved friend, she was not a little curious to know if that mysterious region styled the *world* was as beautiful as she, in the retirement of Clardon House, dreamed.

Pretty, unsophisticated Ada, be not over anxious to enter the said world, for beneath its brilliant exterior of goodness and enchantment lies a hideous sea of dissimulation and wickedness.

How fond the meeting between the youthful friends, and yet how different from what might have been expected, considering the singular nature of their parting! Neither referred to it, each tacitly

agreeing to shun the subject as painful and embarrassing. Their renewed intercourse showed up, more clearly than heretofore, their contrasted characters; the haughty impetuosity of Liliás's nature serving to draw out, in broader relief, the child-like simplicity that made so large a share in Ada's composition; and if the former was worshipped by the gentlemen guests as nothing short of a goddess, the latter was loved and petted as "an angel." Aye, and a very beautiful angel she looked too, on the occasion of her first ball, and not a whit the less attractive for the want of wings; her simple robe of gauzy blonde, falling in a thousand graceful folds round her supple figure, and her blue eyes sparkling with expectant pleasure. No ornaments she wore, except a wreath of natural rose-buds, that confined the golden glory of her hair; her youth and loveliness were better far than diamonds and rubies.

One young gentleman in particular, the Honourable Herbert Randall, seemed fascinated by her beaming smile, yellow tresses, and bewitching guilelessness; and, to judge from her blushes and evident pleasure when he was conversing with her, she was equally delighted with his frank good-humour and courteous attention. May be, their mutual favourable impression will result in marriage; it looked very like courtship already, though if anyone had whispered so much in Ada's ear, she would have been amazed and shocked; knowing nothing more (through ignorance of her own feelings) than that she merely thought Herbert Randall a very agreeable young man—of course, that was all.

The visitors were at last departed, with the exception of Ada Hartop, who, at the earnest solicitation of Liliás and Sir Shenton, was to outstay them a fortnight. No trace of the extraordinary bustle was left; a few days of indefatigable industry on the part of the servants had reduced the scene of confusion to its pristine order, and nothing but the jaded appearance of the youthful hostess remained to tell of over-excitement and late hours.

Liliás, though really hospitable, had experienced a keen sense of relief when the gates swung back after the exit of the latest visitor.

How wearisomely long seemed to her the lingering good-byes, and the repeated invitations! how very, very tired she was of it all, and how glad when it was fairly over. Ada was by her side,

placed on a soft couch, near a blazing fire in the drawing-room. Sir Shenton directly joined them, and was soon immersed in the perusal of a leading article in the *Morning Star*; having finished this, he turned over the paper for the account of the foreign news, when a paragraph caught his eye, which he read aloud; it was this:

"The widow and sister of the late regretted member for Lilmouth, Norman Lyttleton, Esq., have disposed of their town residence in Pall Mall, and retired to the ancient Lyttleton estate in Cambridgeshire, where they propose permanently residing."

"Poor fellow!" the baronet continued; then, turning to his daughter, inquired, "Do you remember the circumstances of Mr. Lyttleton's death, Liliass? they were very distressing."

Liliass settled herself in an easier posture upon the lounge, and moved her head, in token of negation.

"Ah, to be sure!" resumed her father; "his decease occurred while you were absent; it was at the commencement of July. He was an able speaker, though a very young man, and in him his party lost a powerful adherent, and the Opposition a formidable antagonist. He had, but the night prior to his death, electrified the House with a brilliant speech upon the Reform question; and to think," the baronet conjoined, more as though speaking to himself, "of that voice, which had held, spell-bound, a number of men, themselves the most eloquent and well-informed, being, ere twenty-four hours elapsed, stilled for ever. The fate of that man impressed me deeply—cut off in the brightness of his youth and earthly glory. I can picture to myself the agony of his wife, when he, stricken with a momentary disease, was laid a corpse before her. She is said to be an amiable and beautiful woman."

"Ah, unhappy lady!" parenthetically remarked Ada; "no wonder the scenes of her blissful married life are hateful to her bereaved heart: how sincerely I sympathise with her! What would your feelings be in such a situation, Liliass?"

Miss Bellamy, thus appealed to, opened her languid lids, and half raised herself.

"Don't ask me, Ada—I cannot tell: if you are fond of imagining awful sights, and fearful anguish, I am not." She spoke in so tart a tone, and her words came in such spasmodic gasps, that both her father and Ada turned surprisedly towards her. Her face was, if possible, paler than when Ada had mentioned its ghostliness in the hall; her delicate features were convulsed with an expression of horror, and her eyes blazed with a feverish lustre.

"I am sorry, dear, if I have made you nervous," Ada

exclaimed; "I did not think you would so completely realise what we spoke of, and you certainly must have called up in your excitable mind a perfect diorama of the dreadful circumstance, or you could not look so terrified; kiss me, dear Liliás, and say you forgive me."

Liliás complied with her friend's wish, pressing her lips upon the young girl's pitiful face; but the caress was without affection, and this Ada, with much grief, comprehended. Slowly and sadly she went back to her seat, joining without interest in the further conversation of her host. The warm current of life and joy in her young heart was depressed and stifled by the coldness of Liliás's manner, and it took long to recal a smile to her face.

Later in the evening, when they were about to retire for the night, Liliás came to her, and fondly bade her forget and pardon the unfortunate incident. Ada, filled with new gladness, protested she had not thought her at all unkind, and that her grief was only occasioned for the weakness which could be effected by such a trifle.

"Yes, it was very weak of me indeed," Liliás said, "and I will for the future be more upon my guard."

Her friend's eyes filled with tears at this misunderstanding, and she eagerly hastened to explain that it was delicacy of health, not puerility of character, she had attributed to her.

"It seems," she said, "that you and I are never again to be to each other what we were."

"No, that is impossible," Liliás thought, "and although the change is in me, it will affect all who are connected with me." She, however, said nothing, but embraced her friend once more before wishing her good-night.

Directly after Ada left Sedgley, the weather, which had been very mild, became so severely cold that Liliás was confined entirely to the house; for it mattered not how warmly she was wrapped up in furs, she would not venture beyond the precincts of the hall-door; and when a more favourable change manifested itself in the state of the atmosphere, she made a proposition to her father of paying a visit to Sarah King, which she insisted alone was wanted to re-establish her health.

The Baronet was for some time strongly averse to the arrangement, being apprehensive of danger to her when removed from his sight; but eventually she won him over to her view of the benefit derivable from the journey.

Sir Shenton himself accompanied her to Blackheath, and even insisted on conveying her to the nurse's cottage.

The good woman, who had been apprised of the honour to be

conferred upon her, was in a great flutter of expectation and delight, and had prepared by the time of their arrival a delicate little repast, which was served in the little front parlour.

Sarah's great cause of regret was that her garden was not in the orderly condition she could have wished it to be for the inspection of her young lady, but she allowed herself to be consoled by the reflection that, if without was a scene of bleakness and desolation, within at least was comfort—such true, homely comfort as is to be met with only in an English dwelling. Everything about her was scrupulously clean, and even superior in its arrangement; thus Liliás was not so greatly inconvenienced by the transfer from her own elegant residence to the small unpretending cottage as might have been expected.

With many pangs of regret and a fond embrace, Sir Shenton bade farewell to his daughter, and returned to the dreary, because desolate, splendour of the Hall. How doubly gloomy everything was without Liliás's presence! The very rooks cawed with a more disconsolate monotony to his fancy; and the waves, whose angry moaning echoed throughout the mansion, seemed more than usually melancholy in their ceaseless rollings. Then Lion, the petted companion of his daughter's rambling and musing hours, how sad his low whine was to hear, and his wistful, sorrowing expression to behold! And not alone did the baronet and the faithful dog mourn the absent one.

CHAPTER XII.

A LIFE STRUGGLE.

As the door closed upon the retreating figure of Sir Shenton, Liliás, with a subdued cry of suffering, clung to her nurse, who pressed her to her heart. She had never in her intercourse with this tried and faithful domestic exhibited the least approach to hauteur or reserve: and now it was with something of a daughter's

Bellamy, disengaging herself from the supporting arms of Sarah, and recoiling with an indescribable air of loathing and fright.

"That," resumed King, calmly, without heeding her mistress's interruption, "you are wishful to conceal anything."

A smile, sickly and pitiful it is to be confessed, settled on Liliass's features as her companion concluded, and she then allowed herself to be led to the table, and beguiled into the pretence of taking tea.

When this business was concluded, which reminded one only of the eating and drinking executed upon the stage, the diminutive hand-maiden was summoned to clear the table, upon which her mistress told her that she might go home, as she would not want her any more that evening. The girl made an answer, intended to be expressive of her gratitude (but which was perfectly incomprehensible), for the permission accorded to her at so unusually early an hour; for he it known that she every night left Rose Cottage to sleep with a poor widowed mother, and returned thither as soon in the morning as the requisite arrangements for the convenience of the said parent would permit of her doing.

As a farther call upon her gratitude, Liliass gave the girl a small present of money, which circumstance so completely bewildered her with delight that it was to the imminent peril of the pretty china tea-service that she was permitted to bear it from the room.

The bustling and thrifty housewife—her mistress—was, luckily for her, too much engrossed with her own reflections to notice the danger that threatened her precious ware, and was but aroused from her abstraction by a crashing sound, as the girl reached the door of the kitchen. Out then rushed Sarah, her thoughts torn from their former pursuit, and now as solely fixed upon her cups and saucers as if nothing higher than porcelain existed.

What a sight greeted her scared eyes! There, in helpless sorrow, stood the maid in a *debris* of broken china; not an article had escaped demolition.

"You careless creature!" was all the poor woman could say, so confounded and grieved was she for the loss of her tea-service.

"The careless creature" looked up with an air of relief; evidently she expected a greater reprimand than the one conveyed in this short sentence; for though Sarah King was generally a kind mistress to her, she had at intervals displayed symptoms of violent temper, when put out by some act of thoughtlessness on the part of her little servant, who, upon the present occasion, was loud in her attestations of regret for the accident. These were interrupted by Liliass, who pronounced her freely pardoned, for—impelled by the spirit of curiosity, which never wholly deserts us, however

immersed in trouble—she had proceeded at once to the scene of confusion.

In this manner relieved from a weight of fear, which perhaps may have taken the form of diminished wages, the girl speedily took her departure, and her mistress, with her visitor, retraced their steps to the parlour.

If Liliás had eaten little at tea, abstinence certainly had not improved her appetite by the supper hour. The collation which Sarah had provided with such care could not tempt her, and it was only the earnest desire she had of pleasing her nurse that induced her to swallow a few mouthfuls of bread and sip at the home-made wine.

When all vestiges of the meal were removed, Miss Bellamy drew her chair nearer to the fire, whose ruddy light was cast full upon her, drawing out with wondrous fidelity every covert line and latent expression in her striking face. Exhausted grief was exchanged for a calmness, that, whether the offspring of resignation or indifference, was as holy and beautiful as any that ever marked the countenance of a Madonna or Magdalene. The gleaming lustre of her full eyes was subdued to tenderness; the ebon blackness of her hair, flooded in lambent light, showed here and there a streak of warm brightness, and the passionate lips were parted in a faint unconscious smile. What canonised saint, what inspired vestal was ever fairer, or, in seeming, of a purer, heavenlier mind?

Sarah King, perhaps, had some such thought as she silently contemplated her, for she sighed sadly at the sweet spectacle of youth and beauty presented to her sight. Mixed with her admiration may have been sorrow that a being so lovely and gentle should remain in the world, subject to its torments, a prey to its allurements and deceptions; or her sigh may have been called up by other causes, of which the said world knew nothing.

They talked together much and earnestly that night, and even when the booming bell tolled the third hour, the dusky figures of the young lady and her nurse were still bending over the fire. Subdued by sympathy, Liliás, with a more rapid transition from serenity to melancholy than her previous one from excitement, was melted to tears, and upon the constant breast of her nurse sobbed long and violently—so long and so violently that King began to be alarmed. But after a time her tears ceased to flow; the convulsive shocks that had shattered her frame so fiercely subsided, and an occasional moan was all that broke the stillness of the house.

When at length they rose to go to their chambers, Sarah requested to sleep in the same room with her young mistress, but this she almost with terror denied her.

"No, my kind nurse, no, I prefer being alone," she said hastily; adding, lest she should wound the affectionate creature by the manner of her refusal, "you will have sufficient trouble in the daytime, and I must not permit you to spend your nights as restlessly as I do mine."

The nurse, instead of answering, opened the door of her room, and after attending to her wants, caressed and left her.

"Not even to her can I reveal that," Lilius murmured in an agonised voice, when by herself, "that secret must remain only in my possession: on me alone must its blighting curse fall. And is it not possible that in the wanderings of sleep I might disclose it, when she would become included in my ruin? Good God! how many would be involved in disgrace should that ever be discovered! but no, no, it cannot be; though should it, there is always a remedy at hand. The grave ever affords a resting-place for the wretched—a sure retreat from ignominy."

With this fearful reflection she closed her eyes; not for refreshing slumber, but for dreams, surpassing in their harrowing character the most frightful of waking fancies.

A fortnight passed much after the manner of the first day. Lilius walked out occasionally, thickly veiled, and attended by her nurse, and after these excursions would go back to the cottage enfeebled rather than invigorated. At the end of this time their rambles were put a stop to by the setting in again of severe frosts; and reclining upon a sofa, languidly turning over the leaves of a book, or taking up and putting down a piece of embroidery, under the ridiculous pretence of working upon it, were the chief diversions of the morning. While in the afternoon, when Sarah had completed her domestic arrangements—for she had dismissed the servant altogether—Lilius would sit at King's feet with her head resting upon her lap, conversing in subdued and serious tones.

One evening, as she sat thus, she was taken seriously ill. Powerless to assist herself, King carried her to her bed-chamber, where she left her to despatch a messenger for a surgeon.

It was not long before the medical man arrived. He ordered his patient to be confined to her apartment, and abstain from all anxiety and excitement!

"The first direction I can attend to, Sarah," said Lilius, subsequent to the doctor's departure; "but how shall I regain my peace of mind? that, I fear, is for ever lost to me." Here she paused for a moment, then added, gravely, "I may not get over this; it would be well for me if I should not recover. If it kills me, remember your promise of secrecy, and never forsake—" she could say no more, but, with a cry of acute pain, fell back upon her pillow in a fainting condition.

"Almighty God, spare her! oh, spare her!" moaned her attendant, falling upon her knees by the side of the bed.

"Your prayer will be heard; the young lady will not die." It was the doctor who thus spoke; he had suddenly returned, impelled by an instinctive fear that if he were absent his patient would be less likely to recover.

The woman rose with a glad smile—her alarm was entirely vanquished, for in her simplicity she deemed the doctor's presence all-powerful to save Liliás.

"You are very much agitated, and I think had better leave the room," the surgeon said, addressing King.

"No, pray let me stay," she cried, entreatingly.

"If you will promise to act according to my directions, you may," he answered, kindly. Sarah gave the required promise and remained.

Liliás continued in the same lethargic state nearly the whole night; the doctor did not go home, but waited with almost as much anxiety as the nurse for the signs of dawning life in his lovely patient.

He, like all who saw her, was quickly interested in her fate, and might be said to feel the joy of a friend when he saw the heavy lids upraised, and the pale lips resume their colour.

"She will soon be right now," he whispered to the nurse; "do not fear, the worst is over." And so it was, for at the close of the day, though Liliás was very much exhausted, she was certainly in no danger of dying.

CHAPTER XIII.

EMMA'S SEARCH.

EMMA ADAMS, who, strongly against her will, was left behind at the Hall, filled up her time in efforts to discover something which might give her still greater power over her mistress than she already possessed. Every corner of the old-fashioned bureau, that yet maintained its place of honour in Liliás's boudoir, did she ransack. No portion of a letter, no miniature or locket, rewarded her search: it was to all intents fruitless.

She knew much of her lady's life not known to any living being save themselves and Sarah King (whose influence over her mistress she greatly dreaded, and of whom she was extremely jealous), but she was convinced that Liliás had not acquainted her with the most important part of her history; and to become entire possessor of whatever was hidden in Liliás's life had now made itself the paramount object of her desires. She reasoned that her

speedy and permanent advancement was secured if she could get Lilius entirely into her thralls.

Distracted at her want of success, Emma at length bethought herself of an expedient to unfasten the desk (the key of which Lilius had taken with her), for the maid believed, she would there find something to assist her in the work of discovery. The plan she resolved upon was to collect together as many keys as possible, with the hope that one out of the number might fit the lock of the *escritoir*.

The operation of her designs she put off till night, and when all in the house were wrapt in dreams, her stealthy footsteps glided softly from her own chamber to the apartment of her absent mistress. Before commencing her unhallowed task, she carefully closed the outer doors, and shaded the wax taper she held in her hand, lest its light might give rise to curiosity in the mind of some late traveller, journeying along the dark road.

Tremblingly she applied first one key and then another to the lock of the desk, which, being an intricate one, resisted her repeated efforts to unfasten it; but after a time, and just when she was beginning to despair of success, the bolt gave a sharp clanking noise backwards. Great was her delight to hear this sound, and great also was her alarm, lest the noise should reach the ears of any of the inmates of the house. How fearful guilt makes its followers! All in that solemn hour were far from holding thoughts of suspicion, and the confidence-abusing girl might have made much more disturbance in the house without the sleepers being aroused.

Her heart beat wildly as she opened the lid of the desk, which she imagined alone lay between her and an important revelation.

An heterogeneous mass of papers filled the desk, every one of which she submitted to a sharp scrutiny, throwing aside the last with an expression of annoyance. The next thing she saw was the antique ring.

Emma looked very intently at the trinket, turning it repeatedly over in her long fingers.

"It is very thick," thought she, "and should contain something—a piece of hair, or perhaps a miniature is concealed within the head of this fearful-looking snake."

Emma's pulse beat fast, and her breath shortened as this idea passed through her brain, and putting down the taper upon a table, she held the ring close to it, in the hope of discovering an irregularity upon its bright surface; one tiny, tiny speck she at length espied, it was at the side of the open fangs, and hidden from ordinary observation by the diamond clasped in the hungry teeth. On this slight speck (that Emma conceived

to be a spring) she pressed her nail; the event proved the correctness of her surmise—the jewelled head flew open, disclosing to her pleased sight the long-sought-for object—a miniature.

It was not that of a man, as she had probably expected, but of a lady, and a young lady.

Minute as was the picture, it was marvellously perfect, and must have been a good likeness. The portrait was certainly handsome, but it was also supremely haughty and cynical in its character. How contemptuous a curl was upon the thin lip! what a world of innate self-love and commendation in every feature! “I disdain everybody and everything but myself and my own opinion,” said that countenance, as plainly as ever countenance spoke.

“What can I do with this?” Emma inquired with a deeply dissatisfied air; “what a fool I have been for my pains; this is useless to me, or nearly so; it may perhaps be of service some day, but in what way I cannot now fancy. Stay, there may be more, it is worth the search,” so, reclosing the spring of the ring, she placed it in the exact spot from which she had taken it, and patiently recommenced her self-imposed labour. Now she came upon a decayed bunch of hearts-ease, and then upon some manuscript love-verses, penned by Sir Shenton in amorous days long gone by, so long that they had left no memory of them on the mind of the writer.

These lines, remarkable as much for their bad metre as extravagant phraseology, won but one look from the treacherous Emma, for seeing how faded were the round characters, she threw them aside, with an exclamation of angry impatience.

“Am I never to find anything but this rubbish?” she said.

No, indefatigable Emma; no, to you inspiration is not given, and you cannot, therefore, penetrate the secret of the drawer, hidden from you only by that frail panel. Be content, the discovery you deem so unimportant may prove to be a not insignificant link in the chain, leading to the unravelment of the coveted mystery.

CHAPTER XIV.

LILIAS AND DR. DARBY COME TO A SECRET UNDERSTANDING.

instant's duration ; for, almost simultaneously with his wonderment, conviction pointed to Sarah King as the scribe of the missive presented to him.

With great agitation he broke the seal, for he anticipated something amiss with his daughter—and his forebodings were confirmed. His correspondent informed him that her mistress was ailing—too ailing to write herself, though not ill—and had requested her to inform him of the reason of her prolonged silence.

“My poor child !” the baronet cried ; “I will fetch her back this very day—she is never well apart from me.” And with this intent he posted off without delay to London, his thoughts fixed the whole time upon his daughter.

As he neared King's cottage, he was startled to see the blinds closed in the chamber, and no glow of fire proceeding from the parlour below. His sharp and tremulous ring brought the nurse quickly to the door, who, at the sight of Sir Shenton, manifested great surprise, and even some alarm.

“Ah, your honour !” she said, hurriedly, “I would not, if I had known you would have frightened yourself in this way, have written at all. Miss Lilius is not very ill ; indeed, only a little low and weakly.”

“I appreciate your kind intentions in what you say,” replied the baronet, “but I wish to satisfy myself as to the state of your mistress's health ; can I see her ?”

“Oh yes, your honour, of course you can,” Sarah, replied with some deliberation.

“Then show me the way at once,” persisted Lilius's father, rendered still more anxious by the woman's hesitating manner ; and as she did not stir, nor yet display any intention of immediately gratifying his demand, but seemed on the contrary deep in cogitation, he moved past her, and had placed his foot upon the stair before she well knew what he was about.

“Stay, stay !” she screamed after him ; then in a lower tone of voice resumed, “I think my lady is dressing ; let me first go and see, and, too, your coming upon her so suddenly might do her harm in her weak condition.” With this, Sarah hurried at a rapid pace

her appearance at the top of the stairs, respectfully begging him to come up, as Miss Liliás was now quite ready to see him.

The baronet answered the invitation with a smile and a "thank you," accompanied by a hope that she would not be long troubled by his daughter's illness. His good humour, overcome for the moment by his anxiety for Liliás, had wholly returned, and he entered the small neat room with a light step and cheerful countenance. Liliás raised herself from the bed to receive him, and while the flush of pleased excitement lasted, showed little to cause alarm; this, however, soon faded, and then it was her parent perceived how hollow was her once perfectly formed face, how sunken and dimmed her lustrous eyes and emaciated her form. In her manner Sir Shenton fancied he detected an uneasiness that, according with the evident embarrassment of her nurse, rendered him far from comfortable; but he did not allude to it, and forced himself to speak gaily.

In one of the pauses of their conversation he remarked—"I received yesterday a letter from my sister Charlotte, who has just returned from the Continent with her daughter, and when perfectly established in her London residence, she begs you will spend a few months with her. In my reply I spoke of your present stay here, and said that your acceptance of her invitation must be regulated by the condition of your health. Do you think it will be so improved as to enable you to undergo the fatigues of a London season?"

A flush of more than surprise—of more than pleasure even—brightened the invalid's languid eyes, as she answered, with an eagerness strangely at variance with her late indifference to amusement—

"If I can have my good Sarah to nurse me for a week or so longer, I shall be quite strong enough."

"Well, you shall, love; she will gladly come home with you if you wish it—that is, if you could bear the removal, and I think you could."

"The air at Blackheath suits me best, and I would rather stay," Liliás said, upon the impulse; but dreading that her hasty words might be taken as a mark of regardlessness to her father's society, she resumed, in a tone of soothing tenderness, "I will go with you now, though, if you are not happy without me."

"Happy without you, my darling!" he repeated, "can I be, do you think? Still, I shall insist upon you remaining here a little longer, if you really think the air is better for you; not that I can understand it being so."

There was no insistence needed, to judge from Liliás's expression, which, sad as it had become when she declared her readiness to leave Rose Cottage, brightened instantly.

"Are you very anxious, Lily, to enter the world?" the baronet demanded, with a half sigh. "I did not imagine quietude to be so irksome to you."

"It is not, my dear, dear father, when shared with you; but am I wrong to expect gratification from this visit?"

"No—it is consistent with your years; and all I ask is, that in your pursuit of pleasure, you will not overtax your powers of endurance. Remember, you are my only treasure."

His daughter threw herself upon his breast, murmuring, in tones of mournful vehemence—

"I will not forget! I will not forget!"

When, that evening, Sir Shenton was being driven from the station to the Hall, in his review of the day's incidents, the words of Dr. Darby recurred with greater warning to him. "That Miss Bellamy has a secret, is *certain*." "If he be right," the baronet reflected, "I have made no progress in the task of investigation; every day, indeed, drives me further from the chance of discovery. What can I do?" The answer was—"Nothing!"

Three weeks from this, after repeated puttings off on Liliás's part, it was arranged that she should return home; and thither she was taken, under the zealous guardianship of her nurse, who almost smothered her in furs, lest she should be fanned by a breath of cold air. She might be said to carry her mistress to the drawing-room, where Sir Shenton was seated with Dr. Darby, and having divested her of her cumbrous wrappers, curtsied herself out, and started for Blackheath within the hour. Following the tender reception of Liliás by her father, the doctor addressed himself to her, receiving only, in answer to his cordial salutation, a nervous incline of her beautiful head. He would not appear to remark any peculiarity in her manner, but in his customary easy fashion ensconced himself in a seat adjoining hers, and commenced an animated conversation, with the benevolent intention of cheering her. His philanthropy was, unhappily, completely wasted; and, much to his distress, he was forced to leave her to her melancholy. Sir Shenton at one time absenting himself from the room, the doctor took this opportunity of expressing his delight at seeing her look so well. He might have spared his congratulations, for she was pale and sad enough to call forth a condolence instead. Possibly Liliás thought this, for, with a gesture of impatience, she drew forth her hand from the doctor's, who had playfully imprisoned it during his speech.

Dr. Darby perceived her reluctance to his company, and in tones of much feeling said, "You have no occasion to fear me; I would befriend you with my whole endeavours, for from my soul I pity you." His looks so completely corroborated his words,

that the reserve which Liliás had previously manifested was thawed in a moment, and replacing her fingers in his broad palm, in a few grateful, heartfelt words, she thanked him for his sympathy.

"Your gratitude has not at present been merited, Liliás," was his answer, "some day it may be—only trust me."

Upon this ensued a whispered question, which, while it drew forth a start and blush, also produced an answer seemingly satisfactory to Dr. Darby; who, with a countenance beaming with kindness, continued to converse in low tones to his sweet neighbour, till the return of the baronet, when the discourse became general, Liliás entering into it with a vivacity and interest that considerably elated her solicitous parent, and completely dispelled the ghost of suspicion, conceived long before, and from time to time imperceptibly fed.

"I am going to London to-morrow," the doctor said, as he stood upon the threshold of the door, "and if Miss Bellamy will give me the address of her old nurse, I will call upon her."

"You are very kind; how can I find words to thank you?" Liliás exclaimed, her eyes moist with excessive emotion.

"Pooh, pooh! I am going solely in the pursuit of pleasure, and doing you a service, my dear young lady, is the greatest pleasure I can know," was the cavalier rejoinder.

Sir Shenton, who was looking over a book, had not heard a word of this conversation, though it had been carried on for his benefit, and Liliás, quickly recovering herself, hastily wrote the address of Sarah King, and delivered it to her visitor.

"If I do not bring you good news, Liliás, never call me your friend again," observed Dr. Darby, as he bade her adieu.

Liliás would have answered, but her voice failed her, and, taking the proffered hand of the physician, she as well expressed her sense of his kindness by the soft pressure she gave it as she could have done by the finest speech ever penned or spoken.

The doctor did not make his appearance on the evening of the next day, as Liliás had almost expected, nor yet upon the succeeding one, and she was getting anxious. Upon the third morning, however, he visited them, and gave a very satisfactory report of King's health, which he said (looking hard at Liliás) "promised to be very good; her constitution is famous, and you need never alarm yourself; but, notwithstanding this, I have told her," he continued, "that she must consider herself as my patient for a little while, and that I should visit her each time I went to London."

"Dear me, doctor, you quite surprise me!" the baronet ejaculated with amazement. "I had no idea King required medical attendance; when I went to see Liliás she appeared perfectly well."

"Yes, my dear Sir Shenton, she does so, and it is this which makes the case more important; she is suffering from organic disease of the heart.—Why, Miss Bellamy, you look frightened! Terrible as the words are, I can assure you that in them rest the only cause for alarm; I will undertake to say, that under my care she will live as long as if nothing were the matter with her. It is an interesting case, very; I do not know when I have felt so absorbed in the success of an experiment."

"Why, doctor, you talk of experimentalising upon a human body as carelessly as you would speak of amalgamating drugs," the baronet exclaimed.

"Do I? Then, Sir Shenton, I give you an exceedingly erroneous impression, for it is not so much my head as my heart that is engaged here. This person is dear to your daughter, hence my concern. You speak," he added in a grave voice, "of the cruelty of making experiments upon the body which are intended for good. Are they to be compared in atrocity to the hourly experiments made upon the heart? Is the dissecting knife of the surgeon more ruthless than the poisoned dart of treachery?"

"Oh, doctor!" sighed Lillias.

"What! have I distressed you by the use of those ugly words?" inquired he, gently, adding, in a tone loud enough to be heard only by her, "Have you cause to agree with me?"

"Are you a man or a sorcerer, for I know not what to think of you?" she answered shudderingly.

"Think kindly," returned he, in the same whisper, "and don't believe a word about your nurse's illness; she is in as little need of physic as I am. You understand what I meant to convey," and here their conference was interrupted by Sir Shenton.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HON. MRS. ASHTON.

"YOUR aunt has certainly taken a long time in setting her house in order, but she sends word all is comfortable now, and she will be glad to see you any day this week."

Sir Shenton Bellamy was walking with his daughter in the sycamore avenue when he thus addressed her.

"I intended writing to-day," was Miss Bellamy's rather impatient comment; "there is nothing so trying as these delays."

"I should not so readily console myself to your going from home again," Sir Shenton remarked in a little while, "did I not think the change of scene would be serviceable. The

country is too dull for you, and will be for me likewise when you are away. I think you must ask your aunt whether she cannot accommodate her poor brother; if not, I must for the time endure the annoyance of living at an hotel, for near you I must be. Would you rather go to London than with me to France? You are yet free to decline the invitation."

Lilias bent down to pick up a flower, that had fallen from her hand, before she answered her father.

"I don't think I ought to refuse my aunt; she may be hurt, and really I should like to go."

There was a faltering in her tone of suppressed eagerness, which the baronet noted with a feeling akin to pain. He could not comprehend how it was she had set her heart upon this visit, when not earlier than Christmas she wished to abjure society.

To avoid showing his disappointment at the preference Lilias gave to strangers, he commenced giving some account of her aunt, but as it was not very explicit, it will be well to submit to the reader a more detailed description.

The Hon. Mrs. Ashton had been a beauty, and yet retained considerable personal attractions. The pale pink and clear white of her complexion, and flaxen hue of her hair, entitled her to the appellation of blonde, though her eyes were brown, as also her lashes and eyebrows. She had small, perfectly chiselled features, denoting no great strength of mind, or warmth of heart. Her form, developed by time, was sufficiently *embonpoint* to be becoming at the age of forty-three, and her bearing was at once a compound of graceful condescension and haughtiness. In every respect she differed from her brother; the hearty affability and sympathetic geniality evinced by him, in her assumed the mild form of courtly politeness. Before her twentieth year she had married the Honourable Mr. Ashton, second son of one of the proudest of English peers. Her beauty, birth, and peculiar tone of mind, conspired in qualifying her to reign in the exalted circle to which, after her marriage, she was introduced. Very agreeable to her was this change, since she had previously lived (with the exception of brief intervals spent yearly at a watering-place) wholly in the seclusion of Sedgley Hall, with no other society than could be afforded by the neighbouring gentry, whose meed of praise was all insufficient to satisfy her cravings after adulation.

The communion between Sir Shenton and his sister had never been great subsequent to her marriage, and about the time of Lilias's infancy had been broken off almost entirely, owing to Mr. Ashton having accepted an appointment under government that demanded his constant presence in Spain, whither his wife followed

him, taking with her their two children, a boy about six years of age, and a girl just turned her third year.

With the exception of a flying visit to England, Mrs. Ashton had not visited her native land for fifteen years, and her removal from Spain was caused at last only by the sudden demise of her husband. She did not then immediately return to England, but contended herself with giving to her brother, by means of a letter an account of her bereavement and consequent departure from the land of her adoption. In the south of France the period of her mourning had been passed; and then by easy stages she made her way back to London.

It would seem that Mrs. Ashton's sisterly feelings were far from strong, or she would have proceeded, immediately after landing, to her brother's seat; but knowing no promptings after maternal fondness, except those of civility, she contented herself with writing to Sir Shenton, and inviting his daughter to London to spend the ensuing season with her. This, after due consideration, she was satisfied was all that etiquette demanded of her, and she therefore made her mind easy.

It must not be thought for a moment that Mrs. Ashton unintentionally omitted to couple her brother's name with that of her niece in the invitation. She was a woman who never overlooked anything, or decided upon the most trifling action without proper consideration. Lilius, she thought, could so join in the customary amusements of herself and daughter as to be no trouble to her: with Sir Shenton the case was different; he could not be put upon her visitors for entertainment when she felt indisposed to entertain him herself, and so she decided that she should find him a bore. To be sure he might for a moment feel wounded by her coldness, but that this would be compensated for, in his sight, by her kindness to his child, she was fully convinced; and laying this pleasing unction to her soul, she, dismissed the consideration altogether.

To sum up her character in a few words, I may say that she was compounded of selfishness and vanity, with a deep gloss of pride and duplicity. Her rule was to judge every one by herself, and accordingly, for the most part, her conclusions were erroneous. Never having required assistance, either in the way of patronage or sympathy, she was the least likely person on earth to give help to the needy or pity to the distressed. *Her* husband had always been good-tempered, or at least submissive, and her children had occasioned her the very least anxiety, consequently she deemed that if everyone was not equally fortunate it was their own fault. Did some ill-used wife venture to complain in her presence of wrongs that could not be kept hidden, she would commence an argument, bland in tone, but crushing in words, to the effect that the woes

she complained of were, if not imaginary, self-made. Neglect, insult, and oppression—terms always outrageous to ears polite—conveyed only to her the idea that something was wrong in the person who used them. The system of society, like the political constitution, had in her a firm supporter of its infallibility. I really believe she thought sickness, poverty cruelty, and sin, evils whose reality were more a matter of speculation than bewailing. Then for the minor cares of life she had naught but scorn and cold incredulity. Upon these she bestowed no argument, holding them unworthy of notice, and should a thrifty housewife—by unrelenting circumstances made intimate with her kitchen—have the temerity to speak of the idleness of the maids, or the depredations committed upon her larder by their swains, instantly would she take a survey of her own well-regulated household, and decide upon its evidence that such a trouble as the one lamented was non-existent. She could make no allowance for persons whose positions were less fortunate, or whose tempers had been soured by repeated disappointments: for ever applying to the narrow code of her individual experience for rule in favour of or against the suppliants to her commiseration or good opinion.

Sir Shenton could not tell Liliás all this; indeed he did not himself know the hollowness of his sister's heart, though he was sufficiently conscious of her selfishness to give his daughter reason for supposing that she would not be troubled by a too demonstrative affection from her unknown relative.

"It is well for me her nature is so cold," thought Miss Bellamy; "it will save me a world of annoyance, to be enabled to do as I please without interference or inquiry."

At the termination of the week Liliás wrote to inform Mrs. Ashton of the day and hour she might be expected to arrive, which elicited a reply by return, expressive of the rapturous delight—people devoid of feeling invariably make use of strong words—she was bestowing upon her loving aunt by concurring with her wish, than which she had no dearer, except it was that her neice and daughter might become firm friends. In conclusion, she said a carriage should be in readiness at the station to convey her to Park Lane, for there Mrs. Ashton had taken up her residence.

In writing in so affectionate a strain she was unconscious of her own insincerity; involuntarily and unknowingly, she was hurried from the confines of truth by the desire to be extremely courteous and agreeable. There are many people in the world like Mrs. Ashton, who live only to make a favourable impression, and who, when it is made, unregardingly turn aside in the further pursuit of that vainest and paltriest of ambitions—the desire to please the eye and sense, without caring to touch the heart, or elevate the understanding.

Emma Adams was, of course, to accompany her mistress, and greatly to her joy was this arrangement made, for she foresaw that it was only by being continually with Liliás she could hope to gain a greater hold upon her. Contrary to her expectations, she had not, since Liliás's return to the Hall, made any farther way in her confidence; but nowise daunted by this, she busied herself in arranging new plans, and perfecting previously-formed ones.

It was now the end of April; the weather was mild, notwithstanding a bracing wind, and altogether nothing could be more auspicious than the proposed excursion to the metropolis.

Though much thinner from her recent indisposition, Miss Belamy was decidedly improved; the brilliant colour upon her cheek did not fluctuate as heretofore, but remained a constant and beautiful contrast to the clear fairness of the rest of her face; the wild fire of undue excitement, which had hitherto blazed so fiercely in her dark eyes, was subdued into a more natural lustre, and the fickle sadness and gaiety of her mood toned down into what, for her, might be termed cheerfulness. Within her, it appeared, had long burned the incipient fires of fever, which her illness had purged her of; and she was now in a fair way to regain her vivacity of disposition and robustness of constitution.

It was as if this improvement in her health surprised and almost vexed her. "How is it," she would say to herself, "that with this dreadful knowledge I can live on? By brooding upon it as I do, some would go mad, but of late I have surprised myself with being momentarily forgetful—nay, even gay. Is this a sign of security, or am I unconsciously rushing to destruction—my eyes covered by a pall, my senses lulled by apparent safety?"

Now when it comes to trying to be miserable, happiness is not far off; indeed, for those gifted with earth's best blessings, youth and vigour, it is next to impossible to maintain a continual gloominess, and as the griefs of the young are more acute than those of age, it is not fair that they should be as enduring as the sorrows which press upon grey hairs. Hope bids the crushed flowers of expectation spring again, and drowns in gleeful mockery the warnings of sage experience. Still, for ever will the young heart shrivel beneath the blight of disappointment, and from the ashes of blasted desire arise, phoenix-like, anticipations scarcely less eager and glowing than the first. In vain Liliás checked the involuntary smile, and chid herself for the laughter that fell so musically upon her father's ear. She could not fetter the gushing life that beamed from her eyes, made buoyant her step, and sent the rich glow to her cheeks. Yet her gaiety was fitful; at times unnaturally violent, again superseded by moods mildly pensive or

bitterly dark ; on the whole, however, the change in her was highly satisfactory.

Sir Shenton's resolve of attending Liliás to London was frustrated by an unforeseen call for his presence in the North, where he owned considerable property. He fumed greatly at first, seeming disposed to overcome all obstacles to being his daughter's companion, in this her longest visit from home, at whatever cost to his interest, but finally he suffered himself to be persuaded off his desire, and with a clouded brow and heart set out upon his unexpected journey.

Liliás was not to start till the succeeding day, and reversed the proposed order of things by accompanying the baronet to the first stage of his travels, a distance of about ten miles. The weather being exceedingly fine, she enjoyed the ride, despite the depressing influence exercised over her heart by the transient separation from her parent, in whose company she continued until he secured his seat in the railway carriage ; then she was obliged to turn her face homewards, and at a pretty sharp pace did she commence the ride. Her pony gallantly tried to please her as long as possible, but flesh and blood could not continue the speed at which she urged him. The poor animal foamed and panted, as did the groom's steed, simultaneously with his rider. Liliás now began to feel the effects of the rapid action to which she had forced her nag, and was warm and breathless.

"Why, Miss Bellamy!" exclaimed a voice in her rear, "you will kill your pony if you continue going at that rate ; as I have nearly done mine, in striving to overtake you."

Liliás, thus addressed by a familiar voice, half turned upon her seat, and saw advancing a stout, elderly gentleman, exceedingly lively and sociable in temper, to judge from the smiling expression of his mouth, the merry sparkle of his clear blue eyes, and the entire absence of care in the broad expanse of brow, fully exposed by the derangement of his hat in the hurried chace he had been having after her.

"Mr. Arnold!" ejaculated she, bowing and smiling with great show of pleasure, though inwardly filled with uneasiness—vague and unsubstantial, it is to be confessed, but such as she always experienced in the society of either Mr. Arnold or his

more than commonly cordial, when chance threw them in her way—heartily thanking fate when it kept her from contact with them.

She had a presentiment that by her implied confession of affection she had wronged Owen Arnold, since she could not bring herself to contemplate without reluctance the possibility of her union with him; and this presentiment of the unkindness she felt she must do their son, explained pretty satisfactorily her distaste to the companionship of his parents; for we are generally more solicitous to avoid those we injure than those who injure us.

Innocent of dislike to any human being, Mr. Arnold did not conceive that anyone could do other than feel the same kindly sympathy and regard for their species. Had he been told otherwise, with a decisive shake of his head, and an incredulous smile, he would have assured you pretty plainly that your notions of mankind were shockingly perverted. Thus, in the manner of Miss Bellamy, he recognised nothing but its ever-prevailing fascination, and saw not in her sprightly language and seemingly happy countenance the lack of that most enduring and sweetest charm—sincerity; compared with which beauty and genius are as nothing—mere mock jewels beside the ever-sparkling diamond of Truth!

CHAPTER XVI.

A LETTER OF REMINDER.

IN the conversation held between Miss Bellamy and the elder Arnold, he said that he had heard from his son by the last foreign mail; and when Lilius reached the Hall, she found a letter awaiting her from Owen, likewise brought by the packet in which the one to his father had travelled.

It was a somewhat voluminous epistle, and, with a sense of combined mistrust and veneration—may be of pleasure too—she broke the seal, and commenced perusing the contents. They were such as might be expected from a youth of his character, under similar trying circumstances. He gently reproached her for not having answered his previous letters (all of which she had cast aside, without fully reading them), and solicited with passionate earnestness for a reply to this.

"You cannot, I perceive," he wrote in continuation, "look upon me as your lover, and your generosity prevents you from addressing me simply as a friend, lest I should suffer from your coldness; but do not fear such a result. I am doing my utmost to abandon the hope, so persistently and fondly cherished, that you would be my

wife, and am striving to fortify myself against the news that your heart is elsewhere bestowed. The task is hard, so hard that you can form no conception of its difficulty, nor would I have you do so; from your path I pray that all sorrow and disappointment may be removed. It would be false to tell you I have made any progress in my lesson of forgetfulness. I cannot expect to efface in a few months the bright vision of a life; for I loved you, Liliast, in years when perhaps you were less regardless of my affection than now, though ignorant of its full intensity. No mere form would it be in me to say that my soul has been entirely yours from childhood. In every word you uttered, what candour, what sensibility was displayed! How lovely I thought you! How I longed for the days of knight errantry to return, that I might wear your device and devote myself to your service! and when my father upon one occasion revealed to me the mutual wish of himself and Sir Shenton that our hands should one day be joined, was it inexcusable if I grew up to feel that I had a sort of claim upon you? Numberless are the recollections stored in my mind that if repeated would seem trivial to you, who do not love; but not one of these golden links of memory would I part from. Sweeter far to me is the dim echo of your tones than angel's symphonies. Ah! where is my boasted resolve to free you from your conditional promise, and leave you unfettered as air? When I recall your features with their varied expression, your voice with its exquisite flexibility and music, and your disposition so noble and tender, how vainly do I strive to become a Stoic, and teach myself to resign you!"

More than this he wrote in much the same strain that, while it may excite a smile, may bring to light remembrances, long covered by the rust of care, of letters just as foolish; when by chance the smile may merge into a sigh for the past time of happiness and folly. Who is there who would not like to revive the fond delusions of youth, which pictures to itself such impossibilities of greatness and loveliness? Glorious credulity, too fleeting blindness! that permits us to see sweet simplicity in the cunningest art, and shapes deformity

which he lay with regard to the greatest desire of his existence, and a wild burst of sorrow and appeal concluded his long letter.

"Lilias," he wrote, "forget what I said at the commencement, of relinquishing you. By the continual self-infliction of hopelessness, I had succeeded in stupifying my senses, and this brief state of insensibility I mistook for resignation. The delusion is past; I cannot forsake the trust that you will eventually be mine. Lilias, you must love me I could not see you belong to another.—By the memory of our childhood's happiness, I beseech you to write and say I may hope."

To affirm, in common parlance, that Miss Bellamy was in a state bordering upon distraction when she concluded, would scarcely be an exaggeration. Wildly she paced the room, alternately crushing the letter with vengeful grasp, and looking at it with a tenderness wholly opposed to her preceding and subsequent bursts of anger and contempt. Owen's surmise, that she had laid in oblivion the incidents of their former fellowship, was wrong. She remembered them all as distinctly as he did, if with less pleasure; and now and then was led to ask herself if the love of her childhood was not something more than sisterly regard—whether unknowingly she had not linked Owen's image with her undefined ideas of the future. To describe fully the nature of her feelings towards him, at the present stage of their acquaintance, was what she could not herself have done. The thought of him exercised a strange fascination over her, and therefore she dreaded any occurrence which brought his remembrance more prominently before her. In him she acknowledged a mind superior to her own, and this superiority fired her proud breast with indignation and revolt, yet at the same time elicited her woman's admiration and reverence.

"I will not write," she exclaimed at length, throwing down the crumpled letter; "he shall learn from my silence that he does not impose upon me by his protestations; and yet," she resumed, after a prolonged pause, "he speaks with such earnestness, and is so young to be a deceiver. It seems impossible that he should be false, and in that case what a charge of cruelty he holds against me! Am I heartless, or only reasonably prudent in my conduct towards him? Alas! I cannot tell; my sight is jaundiced, my mind warped, and I can judge nothing aright. Would that this weary round of suspicion and care were over, and I could for ever rest. Rest! how sweet, how heavenly—too sweet, too good for me; my lot must be perpetual unrest and maddening disbelief."

In this sad vein she continued for some time, without having arrived at the course of action to be adopted with respect to Owen Arnold. Her reverie was marked by wild starts, deep, half-breathed sighs, and passionate flashes of anger. Her tiny foot would stamp

with ireful force, and her hand be clenched with a vehemence that told what violent and varied emotions were at work in that fragile frame.

Emma Adams interrupted her mistress's meditations by inquiring if she would like some refreshment, as she had taken nothing since her return.

"No," Lilius answered abruptly, the indications of her agitation not yet smoothed away; "but come to me shortly. I shall want you to post a letter to-night."

"It is getting late," the girl ventured to say.

"It must go, nevertheless; we shall be starting early to-morrow, and it is imperative that none of the servants be entrusted with it."

"I understand, miss," the maid returned respectfully, retiring as she spoke.

Miss Bellamy was in the library, where writing materials were always at hand, and having made up her mind to reply to Owen, she crossed the room to procure pen, ink, and paper. She selected a small sheet, and laying it upon the table before her, bent over it meditatively. It was not her habit to be long over anything, so quickly forsaking her thoughts, she rapidly wrote a few lines signed her name, addressed the envelope, and was folding her note to enclose it, when she re-opened it, saying, "I must see how it reads."

It read as follows:

"Owen Arnold, your accusation of forgetfulness I pass over as a folly too obvious to reason upon; how can I possibly forget when I am so bound to you?

"I have no desire to be absolved from my promise, but am willing, upon the accepted condition, to ratify my word to you when the time arrives; till then, let us forget that we have thought of being anything more than friends.

"You seek for a confession of love; this I cannot give, and if the deduction you draw from my conduct be unfavourable to your wishes, I cannot help it."

"I request of you not to write again in the same strain; it is most painful to me to know that you are so bent upon the fulfilment of what possibly may never take place. Adieu, your true friend, Lilius Bellamy."

This was certainly a curious composition, particularly in reply to the impassioned epistle she had just been reading, but she would not alter it.

"It will at least have the effect of preventing me receiving more love-letters," she said, with a strange mixture of irony and sadness, repeating the two last words with a mocking laugh; "and yet it is almost too harsh; he is not, I think, like—Ah, me!" she moaned, with sudden anguish, "let me not revert to that, though indeed I

could think of nothing better when I wish to steel my breast against insidious passion ! What can I have to do with love, any more than with happiness ?” For some time she was silent, then, rising from her seat, exclaimed, “ I feel shivering, and unusually lonely to-night, and as I have a journey before me to-morrow, I cannot do better than go to bed at once.” With this resolution she rang for her maid, who, having received her mistress’s instructions concerning the disposal of the letter, assisted her to disrobe.

The sleep that visited Liliás upon that night was disturbed and full of dreams. At one time she beheld her father with closed eyes, walking to the very brink of a precipice, whose frightful depths he was all unconscious of ; and when she would have raised her voice to warn him of his danger, utterance was denied her, and she could only gaze upon the scene of his inevitable destruction with frantic, but ineffectual, efforts to fly to his rescue. The last step between safety and death was taken, and she saw her father precipitated from that dizzy height to a foul pit of darkness below. Her horror was too great to bear, and with a piercing shriek she awoke. Despite the intense relief it gave her, to know that her father’s peril was only imaginary, a settled gloom was diffused over her mind, and it was long before her eyes again closed themselves in slumber. This time it was her unhappy lover who disturbed her quiet. She fancied he was at her feet, imploring, with a fearful impetuosity, a return of his devotion. Softened by the spectacle of his despair, she was about to give him her hand in token of her assent to be his, when a scaffold reared its blighting head in the distance. In an agony indescribable, she shrunk from the support of her adorer, and with groans of unutterable woe hid herself away from the black shadow of the gibbet.

This second horror past by, new scenes of torment ranged themselves within her view. Now, with drooping jaw and glassy eyes fixed in reproach upon her, she saw a corpse ; and now, the wailing, plaintive cry of a babe, encircled in dark waters, greeted her affrighted ear.

“ I cannot longer bear this !” she cried, trembling with excess of fear, as she awoke from a final tumult of awful sights and sounds ; and so she passed the remainder of the night in walking up and down the room, vainly endeavouring to conquer the terrible impression left upon her by her dreams.

By the time the grey light of morning broke into her chamber, Liliás had become more calm, and in order to divert her thoughts strove to read, but it was more than she could accomplish to fix her attention upon the page before her.

ROUSSEAU THE DREAMER

If we are to judge of causes by their effects, we will say that in the eighteenth century there was no more important man than Jean Jacques Rousseau. The wild whirlpool of the French revolution, which culminates the political movements of that century, tossed to the surface, with a sort of demoniac mirth, men who were notably enough in their way—men who had the courage and the genius to seize and partly to direct the frenzied current, and who thereby have become perpetually famous. But these men were the result of this social convulsion; they were forced to become its leaders or be themselves swallowed up by it; they were merely skilful pilots who outrode the storm, and must not be confounded with the primary author or authors of this gigantic and terrible tempest.

We are most of us aware with what a new-born energy and resolution the eighteenth century, which, yet in its infancy, turned upon its predecessor, and revenged itself by onslaughts on the decorous conventionalities and ceremonies of that pompous period. Like the young Hottentot, the eighteenth century wished to prove its manhood by beating its mother. From a social idolatry of the aristocracy, the eighteenth century flew to the opposite extreme; and not yet being able to remove the aristocracy, consoled itself by debasing humanity in general, by exposing the weaknesses, follies, and vices of man, and by denying him the possession of those attributes which had been supposed to place him at the head of creation. Irritated by the constant spectacle of man in his clothes of ceremony, they turned to consider him even without the most necessary coverings; nauseated by his assumption of all god-like virtues, they declared him an animal raised by circumstances, not by merit, above the condition of a beast. If the eighteenth century had a belief; if Voltaire and writers of his school had a principle which pervaded their works; if the French mind, become the pupil of these teachers, applied their dogmas to rule their conduct, the belief was the utter baseness and worthlessness of man, the principle was the negation of everything which the observance of centuries had consecrated, the popular application of this teaching resulted in the national mind becoming enervated, indolent, debased, in national morality being thoroughly destroyed, in national honour being doubted, or at most preserved by those whose interest it was to uphold the ancient hypocrisies.

Without the withering sarcasm, the profane wit, the contemptuous philosophy of these writers, the French Revolution would

never have taken place ; but they were not the direct instigators of that stupendous movement. Their philosophy was a philosophy of denial ; it attacked what had gone before ; it had nothing whatever to do with what should come after it. It was a religion which made no proselytes ; a doctrine which attracted no disciples who burned to become missionaries ; it fulfilled itself in levelling the ancient strongholds of superstition, in attacking even the invincible fortifications of truth ; but that was all its work. This work accomplished, it remained motionless, inactive ; and the practical atheism of the country would have rotted into its constitution, would have permeated and vitiated whatever resources of strength were still left in the kingdom, had not a man arisen to breathe life into these dry bones,—to stir with his enthusiasm his indolent and weak-hearted countrymen, to open before them a future in which they at length could believe, and to bare, for a terrible vengeance, that sword which had been so industriously and ingeniously sharpened, yet was now growing rusty in its scabbard. And this man was himself no warrior, nor statesman, nor king ; only a poor dreamer, a philosopher, a literary scribbler—this man, in short, was Jean Jacques Rousseau.

That erratic life which was to pass through so many vicissitudes, which was to be the cause of so much uncertainty and turmoil to others, which was to involve a whole country in wildest confusion, began in Geneva in the year 1711. Almost from his infancy, Rousseau seemed destined for and consigned to that peculiar system of irregularities, physical and mental, which weakened his force as a man, while it added to his personality as an author. He never knew his mother ; his father was a dreamer like himself ; and young Rousseau was left to educate himself as he chose. His mental food consisted chiefly of romances, and partly of Plutarch's "Lives of Celebrated Men," a work which had some influence in guiding his actions if it did not form his character. But in the youth or early manhood of the future philosopher we seek in vain for prognostications of greatness. "The time was out of joint." The unsettled nature of public opinions early found him a disciple. He refused to be governed by ordinary rules of conduct. United to his wayward disposition, he possessed a nature which was singularly prone to vice, but in which there was one virtue—that it was conscious of this weakness. A romantic visionary, dreaming of universal amelioration of mankind, it was nevertheless in consequence of a trifling theft that he was obliged to leave his native city ; and from that date begins one of the wildest, strangest, saddest careers ever witnessed upon this earth. Wandering from place to place, like a man possessed by a fiend, he found no rest ; there was no purpose to guide the warring energies

of his nature, and so condense the power within him. At one time we find him secretary to an ambassador, at another we discover he has turned music-master, then he becomes clerk, copyist of music; again, we hear of him in Paris composing operas, and finally he forms the friendship of the philosopher Diderot, and embraces literature as the ultimate aim of his life.

But with what a strange perversity of principle, with what a lack of constancy, in so many varying moods does he follow his new mistress! There can be little doubt that at first his writings were tinged with the philosophy of which Diderot and his coadjutors were expounders; but speedily the earnest, passionate soul of Rousseau shrank from their cold theories of universal negation; and, in direct opposition to them, he extolled, with a warmth and vehemence which startled the literary world, those ancient doctrines of virtue, morality, love of country, and personal honour, which people had begun to fancy were quite exploded hypocrisies of an absurd and conventional manner of life. Besides, the extraordinary success which attended these primary efforts of the genius of Rousseau elevated him at once from the condition of tutelage. France recognised another power, and echoed the most trifling words of this newly-arisen master; Rousseau found himself an oracle, and straightway fell to uttering his own prophecies—prophecies which were not clearly understood at the time, but which were to be fulfilled in a very terrible manner thereafter.

To estimate properly the effect which Jean Jacques Rousseau produced on the mind of the eighteenth century, we have only to turn to his writings and trace there by what rude, bewildered impulses he staggered forward, and at last became aware of his mission on earth. For Rousseau was, at the bottom of his nature, a sincere man—a man who was compelled to write by the strength of his convictions, a man who was full of the most glaring inconsistencies of thought and conduct, for the very reason that he felt himself imperatively urged to utter the message he had been sent to deliver, yet had the vaguest and most bewildered notions of what that message should be. Nevertheless, in his first work there was laid down one of the primary principles which he afterwards advocated; nay, it was the principle which more than any other remained to him through life a positive belief.

The academy of Dijon had proposed in one of their programmes the following question: "Whether the establishment of arts and sciences has contributed to the purity of manners?" This question, having fallen under Rousseau's notice, became the spark which was to ignite that long-slumbering magazine of thought. Diderot, who was then his preceptor, counselled him to reply; and the

result was the publication, in 1750, of his "Discourse on Arts and Sciences." Virtually this book is a protest against society. Misled by the title many have supposed that Rousseau herein attempted to prove that knowledge was prejudicial to the human race; nor can we deny that amidst his numberless inconsistencies he may even have positively affirmed this for a truth; but the fundamental idea of the book lies in the effort which its author made to bring men back to nature; to show them how man, in his simplest state, was the possessor of the most noble qualities; how the artificial manners and usages of society had corrupted his mental and moral nature; how the luxury and idleness produced by extreme civilisation had been the means of enervating the country, and rendering its inhabitants contemptible and unworthy of a nation's destiny. It was not science, it was society, which he combated. It was not knowledge, but the abuse of knowledge, which he questioned. It was not the savage, but the primal elements of man, which he extolled.

Addressing Fabricius, he remarks, With what wonder the Roman, were he to revisit the world, should look upon the country which he saved. "Gods! you would have said, what has become of those thatched cottages and of those rustic hearths where moderation and virtue formerly dwelt? What fatal splendour has succeeded Roman simplicity! What a strange language is this! What effeminate manners are here! What mean these statues, pictures, and edifices? Fools, what have you done? You who are the masters of nations have rendered yourselves the slaves of the frivolous men whom you have vanquished! It is rhetoricians who govern you! It is to enrich architects, painters, statuaries, and players, that you have watered with your blood Greece and Asia! The spoils of Carthage are the prey of a flute-player! Romans, hasten to throw down these amphitheatres, break these marbles, burn these pictures, and drive away these slaves who bring you under their yoke, and whose fatal arts corrupt you! Let other hands become illustrious by vain talents; the only talent worthy of Rome is to conquer the world, and to make virtue reign there. When Cyneas took our senate for an assembly of kings, he was neither dazzled by vain pomp nor by affected elegance; he did not hear there that frivolous eloquence—the study and the charm of silly men. What, then, did Cyneas see so majestic? O citizens! he saw a spectacle which neither your wealth nor all your arts will ever produce, the finest spectacle which has ever appeared under heaven—the assembly of two hundred virtuous men worthy to command at Rome, and to govern the whole earth!"

Granted that this work was not a literary theory (at a time when literary theories were for their own sake held in great esteem),

but, on the contrary, the first expression of a great truth which had awakened all the passionate enthusiasm of an earnest nature, it is easy to guess what would be the next step of the philosopher—it is easy to determine whether he would be led by the natural consequences of his belief. In 1753, the man who was now becoming famous throughout the world for his strange genius—for his erratic, sensitive, bashful, and yet self-assertive personality, published, as a successor to his former work, a “Treatise on the Origin of Inequality among Men.” It was but the practical conclusion from his previously demonstrated premises. Recognising as worthy of admiration in man only those higher qualities which we denominate virtue, piety, rectitude, he turned, almost in wonder, to gaze upon the strange anomalies which he found in constituted society—how these virtues were ignored by the men most honoured in the world, how they were openly sneered at by public teachers; and once again turning to that primal humanity which he had been contemplating, he extolled as the only fit condition for man a state of pure and simple nature. It was a rash conclusion—it was a good principle attached to a bad example. Instead of taking ideal man—that is, humanity uncorrupted—as his standard, Rousseau took historical man; and laboured to convince his readers that the only enviable life in the world was the life of a savage. With the pertinacity of a warm and enthusiastic soul he clung to this idea; and by a series of extraordinary syllogisms, aided by a fancy ingenious and poetical, and by a most brilliant, fascinating, descriptive style of writing, he raised around his flag a vast number of disciples, until the popular mind in France began to recover from the withering denunciations of Voltaire, and believe that at least in one direction there was hope for the country and for human nature.

But there were not wanting certain men who, applying the severe laws of logic to these impulsive principles, probed them and demonstrated them to be unsatisfactory, if not thoroughly unsound. Professor Vinet (who, generally, has scarcely done justice to Rousseau) in a few words lays bare the syllogism, or series of

which this knowledge had partly brought into being. There is such a thing as the abuse of science; and though we grant that literature is a powerful agent for good, who can doubt that the literature of France in the eighteenth century had been the country's worst foe?

Perhaps despairing of having these speculations, which so nearly bordered on the chimerical, received by that society which he deprecated, Rousseau's next effort, certainly of a more practical nature, was an inquiry to ascertain—"if, in civil order, there can be any sure and legitimate rule of administration, by taking men as they are, and the laws as they might be." This, according to himself, was the main purpose of the "Social Contract," a work which he published two years after the "Treatise on Inequality." Conscious, with the prescience of a prophet, that the throne of despotism had been wholly undermined, he advocated a combination of the people to form their own laws and appoint their own rulers—in short, a democracy. But this proposal, which has become almost common-place to us, he threw into that unsettled state of society like a firebrand; and straightway the people began to listen to him—to the most thrilling and the most impassioned of all their teachers—as he proclaimed to them the divine right of the masses. The firebrand fell, seemingly to be extinguished. It hardly emitted an expiring spark to show where it had buried itself. But instead of thus abruptly nullifying its purpose, it slumbered in a constant fervour of secret combustion, preparing material for that gigantic conflagration which burst and spread like a prairie-fire through the length and breadth of the land, long after the hand which kindled it had been laid beneath the grass and wild flowers of Ermenonville.

It is very singular to remark how, notwithstanding the spasmodic, vacillating, and wayward habits of Rousseau, there seems to be a certain unity of design in the publication of his works. They appear as portions of a scheme—a plan which was certainly formed unconsciously to himself. First, the enunciation of simple principles;—then the application of these to a possible condition of man; then a review of the actual condition of society; followed by the most celebrated of his works, "Emilius," which is chiefly a treatise on education—a method whereby man from his infancy may be prepared for that higher destiny which Rousseau declared was natural to him. The ideas in this book are fanciful, sometimes whimsical—but withal it bore with it that strange charm of intensity, that hidden force of truth, which flashed like an electric wire through excitable France. The country welcomed the book; the government banished its author. Besides those political views which were especially dangerous to a tottering monarchical government, "Emilius" contained the most pre-

sumptuous, because seemingly the most gratuitous, attacks upon Christianity. People could understand why Voltaire, d'Alembert, Diderot, and their followers should never cease to attack religion, when they believed in no religion; but here was a man professing the most exalted reverence for the Creator of the universe, writing with an ardent enthusiasm on the duties of piety, and expressing the most subtle aspiration of the believer's heart—a man who wrote "The majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me, the holiness of the Gospel speaks to my heart," and declaring that "if the life and death of Socrates manifest the wise man, the life and death of Jesus manifest God;" and the spectacle of this man arising and uttering what they considered the most impious denials of the truth was something monstrous and incomprehensible. Poor Rousseau!—so blindly battling with the unhappy destiny which clung around his life—so earnestly striving to utter the God-given message of his heart, and so painfully blundering and stumbling in the execution of his duty—there seems to us in his character only that which should awake compassion—pity, if not respect. Full of the wildest vagaries, of the most flagrant inconsistencies, preaching the most exalted virtue, and himself a prey to the meanest of vices, we behold a man who was maltreated by the very accident of birth, who was cast out by society, and who had his revenge. His unselfish, sensitive nature was soured within him; henceforth we find him uttering only words of fierce invective and denunciation, unless when the gentle hand of nature draws the erring one to her bosom, and for the moment he is at peace with himself and all men. Oftener he is stung into a morbid sense of wrong—fancies men are conspiring against his reputation and his honour, and repays the world's injustice with suspicion and contumely.

It is well known how Rousseau, being forced to fly from Paris, bent his steps first to his native Switzerland; how Geneva welcomed her son by an indictment, and again compelled him to seek elsewhere a sanctuary; nor need we trace minutely the wanderings of the fugitive from place to place, from Geneva to Motiers, thence to the island of St. Peter, and thence, finally, to England. It was a dangerous thing for a country to make an enemy of Jean Jacques Rousseau. The very timidity which had been the source of all that was gentle and graceful in his character he sought to hide beneath a mask of insolence and haughty defiance. But that this gentler spirit dwelt within the man until the very last there is abundant proof. In his letters to M. de Malesherbes, written in 1762, he gives a series of idyllic passages on his love for nature, on the perfect enjoyment he experienced when alone in these solitudes. Rarely has that subtle intercommunion between man and the outer world—which has only of late years

been studied as a principle of our being—been so gracefully, vividly portrayed as in these letters. Here is a picture of his life in this charming retreat, which, from its beauty, we quote nearly entire:—"What time, sir, do you think that I recal most frequently and most willingly in my dreams? It is not the pleasures of my youth—they were too few, too much mixed with bitterness, and are already too far from me. It is those of my retreat; my solitary walks, the swiftly-passing, but delightful days which I spent entirely alone, with my good and simple housekeeper, with my well-beloved dog, with my old cat, with the birds of the field and the hinds of the forest—with all nature, and its incomprehensible Author! When I rose at early dawn, to go and contemplate in my garden the rising sun, and when I saw the commencement of a beautiful day, my first wish was that neither letters nor visits should come to dissolve the charm. After having devoted the morning to various cares—all of which I attended to with pleasure, because I might have put them off till another time—I hastened to dinner, to escape importunity, and to procure for myself a longer afternoon. In an hour, even in the warmest weather, and when the sun was high in the heavens, I set out with my faithful Achates, quickening my pace, lest any one should come and lay hold of me before I had it in my power to give him the slip; but when once I had turned a certain corner, with what a beating heart and sparkling joy I began to breathe when I felt myself safe, saying to myself, 'Here am I master of my time for the rest of the day!' I then went with more tranquil step to seek some wild place in the forest, some desert spot, where nothing shows the hand of man, and announces slavery and tyranny; some asylum which I might suppose myself the first to penetrate, and to which no third person comes with his importunities to interpose between nature and myself. It was there that nature seemed to display in my eyes a magnificence always new. The golden broom and the purple heath struck my sight with a luxuriance which affected my heart; the majesty of the trees which covered me with their shade, the delicacy of the shrubs which surrounded me, and the astonishing variety of the herbs and flowers which I trampled under my feet, kept my mind in a constant alternation of observation and wonder.....My imagination did not allow the earth, so adorned, to be long a desert. I soon peopled it with beings according to my own heart, and I drove far away opinions, prejudices, and all artificial passions, and transported into the retreats of nature men worthy of inhabiting them. I formed to myself a charming society, of which I considered myself not unworthy. I framed to myself a golden age, according to my fancy, and filling up these beautiful days with all the scenes

of my life which had left any sweet memorial, and with all those which my heart might yet desire, I was softened even to tears, as I contemplated the true pleasures of humanity—pleasures so delicious, so pure, and yet so far from men. Oh, if in these moments any idea of Paris, of my own age, and of my trifling glory as an author, came to trouble my reveries, with what disdain did I drive them away at the moment, to give myself up, without distraction, to the exquisite sentiments with which my soul was filled! And yet in the midst of all this, I confess the nothingness of my chimeras sometimes appeared to cast a gloom over my spirit. Though all my dreams had been turned into realities, they would not have satisfied me; I would all the more have imagined, dreamed, and desired. I found in myself an inexplicable void which nothing could have filled up—some violent tendency of heart towards another kind of enjoyment of which I had no idea, and of which, however, I felt the necessity. Well, sir, that itself was enjoyment, since I was affected with a very lively feeling of it, and with an attractive sadness which I would not have wished not to have. From the surface of the earth I soon raised my ideas to all the beings of nature, to the universal system of things, and to the incomprehensible Being who embraces all things. Then my mind was lost in this immensity, and I neither thought nor reasoned, nor philosophised. With a kind of pleasure I felt myself overwhelmed with the weight of this universe, gave myself up with delight to the confusion of these grand ideas, and, in imagination, loved to lose myself in space; my heart, shut up within the bounds of existence, felt itself straitened; I was stifled in the universe, and would have wished to dart into the infinite! I believed that, if I had unveiled all the mysteries of nature, I would have been in a less delightful situation than in this stunning ecstasy, to which my spirit was given up without restraint, and which, in the restlessness of my transports, made me sometimes exclaim: ‘O great Being! O great Being!’ without the power of saying or thinking more!”

From the day that Rousseau was in a manner expelled from his country, he was a changed being. The blow seems to have affected him deeply. Whatever treatment he might receive elsewhere, he had always looked towards Geneva as that corner of the universe in which he might at any time find a sanctuary of refuge; yet he himself publishes an account of how he was attacked in his own house by a party of his fellow-townsmen. They could not understand this incomprehensible being, who seemed to have no fixed principles of thought or action. Vacillating between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, they found him at times attacking both religions; and not being able to account for a piety

which seemed universal—which seemed to ally itself to all that was holy and sincere in beliefs of the most opposite character—they termed him an unbeliever and an infidel whom Voltaire and his disciples were at the very same time denominating a bigot, and upholder of superstition. “From that moment,” says Vinet, “it is impossible not to perceive in Rousseau the heir of the misfortune of Tasso. And it may be doubted if the circumstances which followed this last exile did not accelerate the progress of this intellectual aberration, or if this aberration alone has not given to these circumstances their unfortunate character. The unhappy Rousseau, who should have been always on his guard against the Holbach society, accepted offers of services and hospitality from one of the trusty members of that club, David Hume, the celebrated English historian. He set out with him to England, and scarcely had he arrived in that country, full of his admirers, when he believed himself to be given up by his friend to public hatred and derision. Scandal followed on both sides; and France soon learned, from J. J. Rousseau, that Hume was treacherous; from Hume that Jean Jacques was a villain.” Indeed, we cannot wonder at the disagreement between these two minds of such opposite moulds; although in the dispute which followed Rousseau revealed only too clearly that his already sensitive organisation had developed itself into a morbid distrust and universal suspicion which were the first symptoms of mental disease.

Nevertheless, in the midst of these unhappy vicissitudes, the old power at times burst forth with all its pristine splendour. Even in these “Confessions,” which he now began to write, as a sort of despairing protest against the idea which society was forming of the wandering genius, he displays a minute self-analysis and knowledge of the mind, which stamp him at once as an able psychologist in days when metaphysics were chiefly confined to school-treatises. In the “Letters from the Mountain,” and no less in the philosophical romance of the “New Heloise,” which he had already published, he never forgot his duty as a teacher: how, indeed, could he forget it when it was a supreme over-ruling impulse to teach which moved him to write? Essentially an enthusiastic worshipper of idealism, he struggled after his ideal in many ways, but never lost sight of it. Never was his faith in the nobility of man diminished; never did he despair of man’s regeneration, were the evil influences of society only removed. This profound belief awoke belief in others; and what a belief! It was no slight conviction which shook an empire to its very foundation: and for the French Revolution we have to thank, ironically or sincerely, these erratic, inconsistent, unpractical treatises of Rousseau.

In 1778, Jean Jacques died at Ermenonville, in the bosom of

that France which he had spent his life in trying to regenerate. Previous to his retirement he had shown himself in Paris; had received that homage which was dear to him; then he withdrew to a retreat which he was never to leave. That peace which had seemed on earth to fly from him was at length his; and what heard he, in his deep slumber, of those hurried marchings and counter-marchings, those roars of cannon and shrieks of men which were to be the expansion of that unrest which had found its germ within his individual soul? France was in conflagration; the whole world, terror-stricken, stood and gazed: but poor Jean Jacques slumbered on unconscious of it all!

W. B.

ACROSS ROSS-SHIRE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THREE WEEKS IN SKYE."

ABOUT a couple of miles up Strath Bran stands the small but comfortable Inn of Achnanault (Field of the Burn), twenty-five miles from Dingwall, at which tourists usually rest to ascend Sgor-a-Vullin. A mile further on is Bran Lodge, belonging to Sir James Mathieson of Ardross. From this to Achnasheen, the majority of travellers will begin to grumble at the great length of dreary road; but lonely as it must seem in its great expansiveness, this great strath is much more productive than the wild hilly country behind, which may truly be characterised as the

"Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood."

The magnificent area of Strath Bran furnishes a rich pasture ground for sheep, an animal that has of late years proved a source of wealth to the Highlands, every fleece being, like that which Jason and the Argonauts went to seek beyond the blue Symplegades, literally "golden," being frequently sold as raw material in the market at as high a rate per pound as tea. Indeed, the great sheep lords of Sutherland, Ross, and Inverness, may now fairly be ranked with the cotton lords of Lancashire, and their more ancient brethren, the tobacco lords of the Sautmarket in Baillie Nicol Jarvie's time, and the goldsmiths of Snow Hill and Cheapside, two hundred years ago. For some years back sheep have been more esteemed than men in the Highlands, a fact which was ludicrously hit off at the last election in Inverness, when an independent elector asked Mr. Baillie, if in the event of his being returned, he would be willing to "give the sheep a vote," a joke intensely exquisite to the ears of a wool-producing community. If the tourist pass along the Highland Straths during the months of June and July, he may observe the wool-clipping going on in various districts. Just before the clipping time, the distress evinced by the "simple sheep," under its heavy coating of wool, is often ludicrous in the extreme, while here and there a few unfortunate members of the fold may be seen running about with their fleeces dangling over their backs, the result of mishaps they have sustained in scrambling through the fences. The old fleece is never shorn till the new one has raised it sufficiently above the skin to enable the shears to sever the two fleeces without injury to the animal. On inquiry, I found that the ancient custom of milking the ewes, in order to make cheese from

the milk, has almost entirely died out. In the old Scottish song called the "Ewe Brights," the lover says,

"I've nine *milk ewes*, my Marian,
A cow, and a brawny quey."

and in that beautiful and pathetic ballad, the "Flowers of the Forest," we have the well-known line,

"I've heard a liltin' at our ewe-milkin'."

both passages clearly showing that cheese was considered as valuable a product as wool in the days when those ballads were written.

The prevalence of peace in America will soon, however, bring the price of wool to its former rate, so that the pre-eminence of sheep over men may be soon reversed, the long suit in Chancery coming to be decided in favour of the defenders. A new branch of industry, which promises to rival that of the manufacture of iodine from kelp, long practised on the shores of Scotland, has been begun in the Lewis, where Sir James Mathieson has started a manufactory of paraffin oil from peat. If the efforts of this enterprising baronet prove successful, brighter and more prosperous days may be in store for the Highlanders. Regarding the formation of this peat, a commodity so universal, and so little prized in the north, it may not be uninteresting here to quote an incident from the life of George, first Earl of Cromarty, which has been quoted by almost every naturalist who since his time has written on the subject. The earl's life was protracted to extreme old age, and he relates that when a very young man he remarked, in passing on a journey through the central Highlands of Ross-shire, a wood of very ancient trees, doddered and moss-grown, and evidently passing into the last stages of decay. Led by business into the same district many years after, when in middle life, he found that the wood had entirely disappeared, and in its place was a green stagnant morass, unvaried in its tame and level extent by either bush or tree. In his old age, the earl again visited the locality, and saw the green surface roughened by dingy-coloured hollows, and several Highlanders engaged in it, cutting peat in a stratum several feet in depth. What he had once seen to be an ancient forest had now become an extensive peat moss. Given sufficient time, the same peat would in course of ages become coal.

Close to Achnasheen is a little clachan of the true Highland type, whose every door and window are filled with faces, human, bovine and suine, at the sound of approaching wheels, all eager to see the "Englishman," as all Southerners are called in Ross-shire. The "gentleman who pays the rent," I observed to be wofully lean and spindle-legged, owing, I believe, to the melancholy fact of his being turned adrift to the roadsides to find his own board, as well.

He thus exhibits none of the fat indolence of his Wiltshire relative, who, on the contrary, may generally be seen lying about the doors, full-fed and lazy, giving vent, as the Poet Laureate expresses it, to

“Meditative grunts of much content.”

Achnasheen (Field of the Fairies) is thirty miles from Dingwall, and, like Garve, stands at the point of meeting of two mail roads, one coming westward from Loch Maree and Loch Torridon, and the other southwestward from Loch Carron, the latter being the route which we are to follow in the present paper. Achnasheen will be one of the chief stations on the proposed line of railway, and may thus need, in course of time, a larger inn than the small but comfortable hostelry which it now possesses. Fifty years ago, on a wet stormy night in June, a stone-mason, who became a few years afterwards a distinguished geologist, reached the Achnasheen inn of that day, and, fain to solace himself with something nice after his weary journey, ordered a few slices, first of ham, and then of salmon; but his orders seemed only to perplex the landlord and his wife, whose stores seemed to consist of only oatmeal and whiskey. Obligated to come down in their expectations, and intimating that they were very hungry, the geologist and his companion heard the landlady inform a red-armed wench, with much satisfaction, “that the lads wad tak parritch.” Their indignation, I fancy, must have been very much like that of Christopher Sly, in the “Taming of the Shrew,” who, when asked if he would take “conserves,” replied, “If you give me preserves, let them be preserves of beef.” Now, the hungry traveller may get for dinner, or supper, as many cuts as he pleases of the finest salmon, or yellow burn trouts from the Sheen, whose waters run prattling by. Such a repast I remember to have enjoyed on my return from Loch Maree, when I spent one of the pleasantest evenings I have ever spent in my life.

On leaving Achnasheen, the scenery for four or five miles is very bare, the most picturesque objects being sheep, bogs, and rock, so that the tourist who smokes had better take out his cigar-case, or cutty pipe, and, if there be no ladies atop, proceed to sweeten the sharp air with the odour of Manilla, or the stronger perfume of Dutch Cut. A short distance on is the small loch of Ledgowan (hillside of the blacksmith), which contains pike and trout from three to ten pounds in weight. Further on is the small public-house of Luib Gargan (the rough corner), about which I can say nothing, as I have neither broken bread nor tasted “the rale Glenlivat” under its roof. For four or five miles the land on both sides of the road is Sir James Mathieson’s, Lord Hill’s ground coming next. The watershed runs across the road, about five miles from Achnasheen, when the streams begin to flow westward, and the road to slope

downwards towards Loch Scaven, whose sparkling waters are seen lying in the valley below. Sheep farms skirt this loch on both sides, the level ground on the southern shore being that over which the proposed railway is to pass. Two tiny islands, near the lower end, enliven the otherwise dead surface of Scaven, which is famous for its salmon, they wriggling their way up from the sea, by the channel of the Carron (the winding stream), itself a splendid river for the fisher. Stoddart, in his "Angler," mentions that at the mouth of this river he caught, within six hours, on a day in July, upwards of forty sea trout, ranging in weight from half-a-pound to three pounds each.

On leaving Loch Scaven, the road enters Strathcarron, the mountains to the left becoming grander at every step, their sides frightfully, yet beautifully scarred by the engineering skill of Time, Water, and Co.

The range to the left is called Sgor na Vertach (the rich mountain); that to the right being, as far as the eye can judge, much less elevated. On entering the throat of Loch Carron we met a second, and much larger, band of Skye fishermen, numbering between fifty and sixty, all on their way to Inverness or the Lowlands; for besides letting themselves out as fishermen, they go as far south as the Lothians, to find employment at harvest-work. Truly these poor Celts are, in respect of their self-denying, self-sacrificing habits of life, worthy of admiration. How many of the "gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease," would like to leave the comforts of their own homes, and the endearing companionship of their families, and go into cold, comfortless lodgings among strangers, for four or five months in the year, that the mouths of their children might be filled, and the backs of aged grandmothers be duly clad. The state of things that necessitates this hard life is, of course, not good, and cries out for a radical change; there being no necessity for its existence, as in the case of seafaring men. We hear much of heroism in warfare, chiefly by land and sea, amid the blare of trumpets, and the roar of musketry; but the quiet, enduring, life-long heroism of the poor is the most admirable of all. I shall never forget how one poor old fisherman came up to us with a tear in his eye, and asked if we had come from Inverness, and if it were true that small-pox was then raging in the town, being afraid of falling a victim to it in his old age, and never getting back to the dear old glen in Applecross, to lay his bones beside his fathers. His eye sparkled at our reply, and with a kindly "God bless you!" to our assurance, he started off again with a hopeful step.

About two miles from Craig Inn the glen becomes very beautiful, its sides being steep and precipitous, the hollows alone being

wooded, though as the glen descends the birchwood creeps higher up. A hill to the left struck me as truly magnificent; grim and naked it was, as a gladiator, its face and breasts furrowed with deep scars, that reminded me forcibly of the fallen archangel, whose face

"Deep scars of thunder had entrenched."

Craig Inn is a pleasant little hostelry, forty-one miles from Dingwall, where one might spend a few days both pleasantly and profitably. Its windows look out upon the brawling Carron, and the grand blue hills of Sgor na Vertach and Monar. A good pedestrian may cross the hills and dine at Monar, and be back at Craig Inn again before nightfall. Beyond Craig is the beautiful hunting-lodge of Achnashilloch (field of the willows), belonging to Lord Hill. It is quite new, and is a large Gothic building, with garden and offices behind, and is said to have cost £6,000, the chief element in the expense having been the conveyance of the building material all the way from the granite city of the North. The railway is to pass quite close by, Lord Hill's opposition having been at length withdrawn. Loch Doule (Dugald's Loch) lies to the west, with a long, green, picturesque hill on the southern side, runnelled by dozens of watercourses, down which there must run in winter a quantity of water sufficient to tear up the firmest railway in the three kingdoms, a fact that must have rendered the route on that side utterly impracticable, though seriously proposed. It is better, however, that Lord Hill's opposition is withdrawn, though the nearness of the line to the house (200 yards) will certainly take away from its amenity and disturb its solitude.*

On looking backwards from Achnashilloch towards Craig Inn, we had our last, and perhaps the best, view of the glen; and it is truly a magnificent specimen of mountain scenery. The hills, too, behind the lodge are very wild and stormy; and in the evening, when the grey twilight creeps over the landscape, and the deer gather down into the hollows, the Strath presents a scene that is in a high degree wild, barren, and savage, so much so, that if a stalwart Celt, in kilts and "skian-dhu," pass the nervous tourist "between the gloamin' and the mirk," it is hard to believe that one is quite safe from an inch of dirk "in de powels." The sound of the bagpipe, too, at a distance, much enhances the grim solemnity of these Highland straths; that savage music, which is so execrable to a southern ear, being quite in keeping with the savage scenery around, for when a Celt hears the bagpipe, "he dreams of the old glen, and the old fireside, of the old kirk, and the people within it; of the old kirkyard, and those who lie in it.

* Since writing the above sentences, I observe that this fine estate is in the market.

In the music of the bagpipe there is the roaring of the winds, the moaning of the waves, and the cry of the wild bird."

At Balnagra (town of the goats) begins a chain of lochs much smaller than Lochs Scaven and Doule, which ends in Loch Carron, which is first seen in the distance from the top of the brae beyond Balnagra, over a black band of woods that skirt its upper end; its appearance from this point, as indeed from most points of view, being that of a freshwater lake embosomed in hills, there being no outlet seen to the outer sea. The distance from Janetown, which is 50 miles from Dingwall, has now been lessened to five miles, but I daresay most tourists would like it were shorter, for the scenery is at this point rather tame when compared with the upper end of the strath. Before reaching Janetown the parish church and school of Loch Carron are passed to the right, in connexion with the former of which the following extract from Mr. Kennedy's "Days of the Fathers in Ross-shire," may not be uninteresting, as it affords a striking illustration of that "muscular Christianity" which the Rev. Charles Kingsley so strongly recommends in the work of evangelisation. It has reference to the induction of a certain Mr. Sage into the kirk of Loch Carron in 1729.

"On the night of his first arrival at Loch Carron, an attempt was made to burn the house in which he lodged, and for some time after his induction his life was in constant danger. But the esteem which he could not win as a minister he soon acquired for his great physical strength. The first man in Loch Carron in those days was the champion at the athletic games. Conscious of his strength, and knowing that he would make himself respected by all if he could only lay "big Rory" on his back, who was acknowledged to be the strongest man in the district, the minister joined the people, on the earliest opportunity, at their games. Challenging the whole field, he competed for the prize in putting the stone, tossing the caber, and wrestling, and won an easy victory. His fame was established at once. The minister was now the champion of the district, and none was more ready to defer to him than he whom he had deprived of his laurels. Taking Rory aside confidentially, he said, 'Now, Rory, I am the minister, and you must be my elder, and we both must see to it that all the people attend church, observe the Sabbath, and conduct themselves properly.' Rory fell in with the proposal at once, and on Sabbath, when the people would gather to their games in the forenoon, the minister and his elder would join them, and each taking a couple by the hand, would drag them to church, lock them in, and then return to fetch some more, the process being repeated till not a man was left on the field. Then stationing his elder with his cudgel at the door, the minister would mount the pulpit and conduct the service. One of his earliest

sermons was blest to the conversion of his assistant, and truly a valuable coadjutor he found in big Rory thereafter."

Janetown is a long, straggling village, in which huts thatched with heather are oddly blent with model cottages with slated roofs; the inn, the police-station, the post-office, and the chief grocer's being the only buildings of note. A pleasant view is to be had of an evening from the inn windows, comprising huge stacks of black and brown nets hung out to dry on the beach, vessels at anchor, and hundreds of wherries hoisting sail for the night, and slowly gliding down the loch in picturesque array. The tourist who means to visit Applecross must strike westward from Janetown by a road which was familiarised to our minds by the appearance at its mouth of a boy in leggings astride of a Shetland pony in shaggy fetlocks, to whose custody was entrusted a letter-bag, marked "Sir John Stewart, Courthill." At the further end of Janetown, the stranger will not fail to note the suburb called Black Point, a wretched West-End of smoke-dried huts, with a green-clad rock, called Slimboy, in front of it. These Black-Point mansions are certainly much more like cowhouses or pigstyes than the abodes of human beings, and must prove an eyesore as well as a heartache to every tourist who has the smallest drop of human kindness in his breast. In common decency, and for his own reputation alone, the proprietor should pull them down and erect in their stead a row of comfortable cottages.

After passing through a sweet little oak plantation, fresh and green, between whose branches the waters of Loch Carron glistened in the sunlight, we reached Strome Ferry, four miles from Janetown Inn, the scenery having improved step by step as we went along, till it became at the Ferry very soft and beautiful, the sloping ground of Strome rising in a series of hillocks, which are diversified with natural birch, ash, and underwood. Green fields, too, here and there enliven the otherwise rugged shores, and suggest quiet pictures of rural peace. Surely, in such a sweet spot as this, no one can ever die of brain fever, or heart disease! Some of the natives I observed, were, however, obviously ugly, while the one or two "naturals" that I saw, were painful indications of the evils of intermarriage.

The mail coach, which has come all the way from Dingwall, turns at Strome Ferry, and goes back, a fact which is speedily made known to the intelligent tourist, by a voice at his elbow, crying out, "Now then, gentlemen, we go no further," a fee of three-and-sixpence being expected if the traveller have come all the way from Dingwall. This system of "tipping" is a great nuisance, especially when one innocently "stands" half-a-crown, thinking it quite sufficient remuneration for a man whose chief characteristics are

extreme reticence and taciturnity, coupled with a skilful adroitness in squirting tobacco-juice within an inch of your boots, and when one is coolly told, "The usual fee is three-and-six, sir, please." For the extra shilling it is hardly worth while getting up a show of indignation, as one must economise the nervous system as much as the purse, in these days of high-pressure excitement. The coolest specimen of *sans souci* I ever witnessed, on the part of a coachman, was that exhibited by the man who drove the mail between Penrith and Keswick, in 1856. In the process of being tipped, he stood like a pointer sniffing game, his chin screwed up, and his eyes fixed on some object of interest in the distant heavens, hearing the coins chink into his outstretched hands with the stolidity of a Chinese Mandarin in a tea shop.

Entering the ferry-boat, we had time to look round at the ruined fortalice of Strome Castle, which stands, grey with age and with grief for the bloodshed it has witnessed, quite close to the ferry, and is a prominent object in the landscape. The sun, which had been sulkily hiding himself for half-an-hour previous, now glinted forth in various spasmodic efforts, casting its golden light on sea and land, and chasing the ghost-like haze from the heights of Strome, and the blue mist from the outer sea, on whose bright waters, dappled here and there with purple islands, several vessels were seen spreading their white sails to the breeze. The Skye Hills in the far distance were robed in everlasting blue, and in the silvery mist, still hanging about their heads and shoulders, looked like Old Sea Nestors, chatting together of an afternoon. The ferry is between two and three miles from the mouth of Loch Carron, and is so narrow (only a quarter of a mile) that Mac Culloch was led to infer that this lake was once a fresh-water lake, its sea boundary having been lowered, in the process of time, by the action of the issuing stream. After being rowed across by a strong brawny-armed boatman, whose variegated costume, grey flannel shirt, blue trowsers, and red skull cap were worth sketching, we found a mail-gig, lighter and smaller than the one we had left, awaiting us on the other side. We were coolly informed, however, that we need not take our places for a short space, which space dragged its slow length out to fully a mile up a steep brae, the thirsty tourist not being allowed even time enough to drink a glass of bitter at the inn; for if he does, he must pay dearly for it, by making his legs do penance for his stomach's sake. The proposed railway cannot, of course, cross the high-backed peninsula that lies between Loch Carron and Loch Alsh, but keeping the southern shore of Loch Carron, as far as Plockton, will wind round the coast till it reaches Kyleakin.

The road across the hill between Strome and Balmacarra is not interesting, long dreary moors stretching out on both sides.

but if the day be clear, the mountains of Applecross, on Lord Middleton's estate, may be seen towering aloft in rugged magnificence, behind the heights of Strome. When the top of the ridge is reached, the downward pace of the mail-gig is something alarming, the Highland ponies, "sturdy tykes," seeming to enjoy the fun immensely, and no doubt debating in their own minds at what precise spot they shall tumble over, head and heels, into the nearest ravine. One of them, too, had a serious cough which increased my apprehension still more. To ensure greater safety and confidence there should be no amateur driving on such a road, a privilege strangely permitted during half of the journey to a broad-backed sandy-whiskered Highlander, who smelt strongly of Glenlivet.

In coming down towards Balmacarra, a charming glimpse of Loch Duich (the dark loch) is obtained. This is acknowledged to be the finest salt-water loch in Scotland, and is well worth a nearer inspection. The Skye hills in front, with the blue Loch Alsh at their base, sparkling in the sun, form part of the view. At Balmacarra the mail rests for nearly an hour, and tourists may dine sumptuously here if they choose, there being a first-class hotel, commanding as fine a prospect as can be conceived, Kyle Rhea (the king's strait), one of the finest harbours in the world, lying in front; apparently landlocked by frowning hills, chief among which is old Beinn na Caillich (old woman's hill), keeping count of the vessels that pass and repass at her feet. Balmacarra (Macarra's town, the clan of that name being long predominant here) is indeed one of the sweetest of Highland villages.

The next and last stage of the journey, from Balmacarra to Kyle-akin, is comparatively short, though the distance by sea is much shorter, the road taking a sweep inland with a steep ascent. Passing Balmacarra House, nestling amid fine plantations, the road toils slowly up, giving at the summit a grand view of the hills of Kintail, which rise high into the air, like huge sharp-pointed blocks, brown and bare as stone. The descent on the other side is also steep. Passing a miserable fishing village called Erbisaig (a word of Scandinavian origin), the mail drove us rapidly on, with many a sharp turn round the sinuous coast-line and set us safely down at Kyle-akin, seventy miles from Dingwall, the terminus of the proposed railway and of the present paper, a suitable sequel to which will be found in my paper entitled "Three Weeks in Skye," which appeared in the March and April numbers of this Magazine.

JAMES LEITCH.

BUCOLIC AND CANINE RECOLLECTIONS

As I have been from a boy passionately devoted to all kinds of field sports, my readers can well imagine what intense discomfort I experienced—and why should I conceal the fact!—on finding, some years ago, that physical, instead of mental expansion, was seriously and with gradually increasing effect, interfering with the pleasure of my favourite pursuits; in plain language, precisely at that period when one naturally ceases to grow perpendicularly, I unfortunately carried on the process laterally. I suppose my father's last, and oft-repeated injunction, made—how well I remember it!—just before our old home at the vicarage was broken up for ever, must have had some influence in bringing about the result. In almost his last words he enjoined me to “develope my resources to the credit of the family,” of which I enjoy the proud distinction of being the principal representative; but it strikes me very forcibly now, that I must have seriously, if not wilfully, misinterpreted the paternal theory of “development;” at any rate, whatever other “resources” were available to me when I came into “man's estate,” soon after his death, were certainly not appropriated precisely in accordance with his wishes, either to my personal advantage, or the credit of my family. But I have been candid enough, my considerate readers, to tell you, and you may draw whatever inferences you please, that at this particular period of my history I was fat—so fat, indeed, that I well remember, during my reign of “greatness,” meeting an old college “chum” in Pall Mall, and the fact is stronger impressed on my mind because it was the evening of the 1st of September, in the year 1856, and the only occasion in my life on which I was ever in London on that day. The friend in question was none other than Jack Mordaunt, of Brazenose. I had almost entirely lost sight of him since we trained together for the inter-university race, some three years previously. Jack, or “wiry Jack” as he was better known by, at the O. U. B. C., was evidently as much surprised as he was pleased at this unexpected rencontre; and after deliberately walking round me no less than four times, and with the assistance of an eye-glass taking an accurate survey of my latitude and longitude, more especially the former, he accosted me thus, “Why Charley, man alive, what has come to you?” “What have I come to, you mean, Jack; why simply this,” replied I, drawing my breath in and my waistcoat out. But it was all to no purpose; I could no more modify than I could conceal my condition; whereupon my old friend Jack volunteered this advice, and I felt, under the circumstances, that it was any one's right either to pity or patronise me: “If you can't keep yourself within reasonable bounds,

Charley, go straight to Tattersall's, and invest in a cob up to 20 stones, and ride him as many miles every morning before breakfast; or take my word for it, old boy, with all this to carry, you'll never see the colour of a hound this season." Here he made a playful thrust in the direction of my brace buttons, articles which I could then ill afford to dispense with; but Jack's touch was not characterised by the least degree of feminine delicacy, and the consequence was, for the time being I felt the free exercise of my respiratory organs inconveniently interfered with. This was the prelude to a hearty shake of the hand, after we had chatted some five or ten minutes, and then we parted. I learnt that soon after this interview Jack joined his regiment, was ordered on foreign service, and — ah, never mind! — the last words I shall ever hear him speak, and he always spoke in a loud, boisterous, and merry tone, seem now to ring in my ears, as I lost sight of him turning into St. James Street, were, "Charley, my boy, may your shadow grow less before our next meeting!" Poor fellow! how sadly but truly are his words verified!—the service has lost a brave and resolute officer, and I a frank, generous, and noble-hearted friend in John Reginald Mordaunt; but I am digressing. This advice seemed at the time so reasonable, and as it was volunteered to bring about a result by me so devoutly wished for, I resolved as I walked home through the park, on that well-remembered evening, to act on it, and forthwith take lodgings and plenty of horse exercise in the country, and it was during my sojourn there that these incidents actually occurred, and the following record of them I shall give to my readers, in the exact form in which it was written at the time.

The village in which I have taken up my quarters, although at no great distance from London, has not yet been sophisticated by railways, or otherwise assimilated to an inconvenient suburb of the modern Babylon. It still retains some trace of village customs and organisation, and of village beauty. The parson knows and is known by everybody; indeed, everybody knows everybody else, not only who are his immediate neighbours, but most of their affairs, or, what answers the same purpose in village life, people say they do, and quote examples very confidently. Of course, if such examples are spread, as they sometimes are, with a little scandal, their circulation is quickened and extended in proportion to the extent of it; for instance, I was once confidentially informed, by an old resident in the village, that the vicar had received the suggestive sum of £3 3s. (i.e. £1 1s. per head) from the private purse of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, in order that the creative comforts of one, Sarah Anvil, the blacksmith's wife, might be ministered to, such royal munificence it being customary, I believe, to bestow, at certain times, on women who are fortunate, or unfortunate enough, as the case may

be; to get the largest families in the shortest space of time. Now, as it was pretty well known that Bob Anvil had only taken unto himself a wife some few months previously, my readers may easily imagine with what alacrity this mark of royal favour became known in the village, and how it was commented on. When the report reached me, as I owed Anvil a small amount for horse-shoeing, I took the opportunity of calling at his shop to pay him, and belamed myself with two good old bottles of 1832, put one in each side pocket of my shooting-coat, which I thought, under the circumstances would be acceptable to Mrs. A., and at the same time console me for not having settled my account sooner. "Anvil," said I, on entering the shop, "so you've been distinguishing yourself; and how's the missus, and the little ones?" "Not as I'm aware in particular;" he replied; "however, but as to the little ones, thank God, there's fifteen on 'em, if you'll believe me, sir, and all doing well!" It appeared that the rumour in question which prompted my generosity the rustic intelligence had called into existence on the occasion of Mrs. Anvil's favourite pig presenting her with fifteen little pigs. I merely instance this to show how incidents can be misrepresented and facts distorted; but it has led me away from the description I was attempting to give of our village. The doctor is not merged in the general population, but has a distinct position; there are no trim chemists' shops nor many of any kind, and what there are are familiar, close, prosperous, easy-going concerns, the best and passible being the butcher's, which has a low porch on iron columns covered with honey-suckle over the trim and always clean red-brick paving before the door. There is, of course, a village-green, with an inevitable pump in it, and not far off stands the "Bell Inn," with two spreading elm trees in front of the door under which the haymakers are wont to congregate on warm summer evenings. Geese cackle and nibble the daisies on the green, where there is usually a donkey, with a background of miscellaneous and unintelligible linen hung out to dry or bleach; in the foreground is a wretched little watch-house, and adjacent a railed pound in which rank grass and weeds grow proficiently. The principal inn, or perhaps I may use the word hotel, is the "Mitre," which is at the upper end of the village, close to the dear old church; it is a noticeable place, and, in the old coaching times gone by, they kept post-horses there, now they retain the post only without the horses, but it does not mislead many; they do not let out horses now, and only take them in occasionally when a few visitors drive over to inspect the church. We have, moreover, a real squire; a fine, noble, old white-headed army officer with only one arm; and last, not least, the parson it seems to the choice of the power to know everybody, as much as it is the duty of the latter; as the squire passes up the road

or through the village, with his dogs at his heels, he has a kind and cheery word for everybody he meets; he seems to have a personal interest in everyone's occupation, and to know everything about the poor people's families. All touch their hats to him, and look up for help from him when they want it, quite naturally and of course; and no one ever murmurs that the help is wanting, for the squire takes the giving of it as a matter of course too. He is a magistrate as well, but there is not much law to administer or often. There is, I think, only one policeman, and he generally appears to be working in his garden, and to have reduced his available uniform to a pair of blue-cloth regulation-trowsers; he is considered, by the poor, to possess a profound and mysterious knowledge of surgery and simples, and so establishes his public utility on other grounds; his white head may often be seen coming out of cottage-doors, where his visit has had more to do with the sprain of the footman's wrist or elbow than of his legal rectitude. Everyone you meet on the road of an evening invariably says "Good night!" down there, which alone is an index of primitive country manners.

Not but there is some prospect of all this benighted contentment before long receiving the light of advancing civilisation, and the place coming to some knowledge of the leaven of town advantages: already the outposts of improvement have arrived. The great Mr. Doeskin, who has now retired with an immense fortune from his tailoring business in Sackville Street, in favour of his sporting sons, built the square, bare white house which stands just before you enter the village by the London Road, and has come to live in it; but his ways are decidedly of the town, although he does wear brown gaiters, and rides a cob as broad as the brim of his white hat. There have also been four separate plans for railways to the place, and a railway is now really to come through the church fields, while the station, and the necessary adjunct, a railway tavern with tea gardens, is to be built just where the "sixteen-meadow path" begins, close to the churchyard, which our vicar keeps like a garden, the walks always neatly gravelled, and the turf like velvet; the "sixteen-meadow path" is so called because it goes through sixteen great meadows and corn fields, over to E——, where they have lately introduced gas, which we are soon to have too. Twice a strange gentleman has been seen right down in the middle of the village, with two men measuring the road, and looking through a little telescope fixed up on three legs, and a slip of board with numbers and degrees marked on it, which was held up a distance off on the road by one of the men. We don't know what this was for, but on one occasion one of the attendants wore the uniform of the sappers and miners, which gave rise to an impression among the villagers that they were a party of government photographers. At any rate, be this as it may,

change is manifestly coming on. However, it has not come yet, and the village has still about it the old country field ways, and the people many of their old manners. I won't attempt to sketch the fine, noble, and dignified bearing of the vicar, as I've often seen him visiting among the poor, by whom he is welcomed, loved, and respected. Old Tom Diggles, who was once gardener at the vicarage, entertained a very rude, but not the less true, appreciation of him; and as it will convey a better idea of the man than any description I can give, you shall have it in his own words, addressed to me, as near as I can remember them: "Sir," said he, "I've heard a smart few sermons in my time as ain't done me the good they ought, and it's Tom Diggles as says it; but there ain't no better man, nor one as can preach half so easy as our guv'nor, within twenty mile of the place, and I've no call to bar Lonon neither." So much for the village, now for my experiences during my stay in it.

Last year I called upon a friend who lives in Gray's Inn; he had with him at the time a neighbour of his, who had brought with him a large black greyhound. My friend was just then working (or supposed to be) hard for an examination, and I had intended to make my visit a very short one. It was a hot summer day, and the window looking into the sultry square was open. Instead of finding my friend at work, as I expected, I found him standing with his back to the open window, nervously pulling this dog back, as he stretched up to get his nose on the sill, seemingly with the intention of jumping out. The dog's master was sitting in an old easy chair, one of his legs over the arm, smoking a cigar and laughing. My entrance brought the dog bounding across towards me and the half-opened door.

"Here, Jack—down!" roared the dog's master. "Don't let him out, please." I closed the door quickly, and kept him in. During the whole of our conversation, Master Jack was pushing about the room in an indescribable state of restlessness; now scattering some papers from the top of the tin boxes, where they had been laid, then upsetting the waste-paper basket, and every now and then approaching the window. Each of these little incidents was greeted with a thundering, "Lie down, Jack!" which introduced rather a distracting variety to my leave-taking, and the conversation generally. I rose to go. By this time the dog had seemingly had his fling, and lay carelessly and elegantly stretched out upon the hearthrug, apparently having abandoned the furtive

"Why, Jack, boy! How he takes to you! He's so restless, because he wants a run in the country, which he hasn't had—oh! I don't know when; and I fancy he smells that you are going—you see, he gets tired of Gray's Inn."

"You never keep him in Gray's Inn Square!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, I do—up in my chambers in the third floor; and I fancy he thinks it dull."

The upshot was that I agreed to take him into the country, then and there, and to bring him back with me in the course of a few weeks. I was pleased with my charge, and at the idea of how he would appreciate the liberty and the fresh air. When I got out of the train, and took the omnibus, or coach, as it was called, to finish the last eight miles to our village, I got Mr. Jack on the top with me, for safety sake. Every one admired him, and the driver, who knew me well, as I constantly rode with him, said—

"He's a long way from a bad 'un—ain't he, sir? They're 'andsome sort o' dawgs, them are—reg'lar gentlemen's dawgs, I calls 'em. It's good sport to course with 'em, ain't it, sir? they're so quick-eyed and 'andsome."

I really quite congratulated myself, for every one agreed, and I felt proud of Jack. The talk turned on dogs.

"But they lack many of the best points, in my opinion, which may be found in common mongrels frequently—such as scent, and sometimes fidelity; they pay thus for their beauty," observed one of the passengers.

"Do they, now?" said the driver. "To be sure, common dogs are very faithful and knowing, sometimes—same as common folks; ain't they, sir? Now here comes one," he continued, pointing his whip at Miles, the carrier's cart, as it came jogging on towards the coach, with a roughish-looking, broken-haired, white dog, with a brown patch over one eye, trotting demurely by the side, "which is the most faithfulest and knowingest one as ever I did see. That's old Turk, sir," he said, turning to me. "You remember him with the horse, don't you, sir? Wonderful! wasn't it? Never left him, did he, night nor day, for twenty-six days?"

I knew all about old Turk, and I told the story to my fellow-passenger, who was a stranger to the village.

Every one in the village knew all about old Turk. When Miles, who was the old carrier's man, became master, about seven years

Anvil the blacksmith, and Pagnell, whom an all-wise government had "licensed to deal in tea, coffee, pepper, tobacco, and snuff," doing a bow of polite welcome for her as I passed. She was a happy-looking girl, with a delicate fresh colour, fair hair, and very bright, but dark, blue eyes. With a buoyant step she sprang from the old cart with Turk under her arm, and from that moment he became a known character in this place, as Mrs. Miles's dog. But his allegiance was not exclusive; he entered into the carrying business with demure, but proper determination, and adopted his vocation as guardian and protector of Miles's cart; notwithstanding this, he was always known as Mrs. Miles's dog, and was never to be found at home with her during business hours, when he was at home very early in the mornings, and very late of the evenings, and on Sundays he always bore himself with a marked air as of duty done. On Sunday mornings, when he lay winking in the sun on the clear doorstep in the little yard, when the cart was drawn up, he seemed almost to have put on a clean shirt, and to be enjoying himself without his coat, as Miles always did, and his piercing little eyes, under their shaggy overhanging brows, looked sage enough to have read the Sunday paper, which Miles could not do. But one of the most remarkable points about him which became recognised was his attachment to the horse, "Old Joe," an attachment which was reciprocated. The dog used, when riding with Miles, and anything occurred claiming attention, to run out on the horse's back; and when he was left in charge of the cart, as it was drawn up in the market-place, at the usual stand, Turk used always to take his post and curl round to rest, or watch on the horse's back, looking up with a discriminating snarl if any one interfered with the nose-bag, or came too near. At home he used to sleep in the stable, generally close under the horse's nose, and in the day time, when at home, was always hanging about wherever Old Joe might chance to be, generally lying in the chaff in the trough, with the horse generally chewing close by; but this private friendship of his did not weaken his love for his mistress, or his business allegiance to Miles. The carrier and his wife were not happy at home; he is known as one of the most ignorant, trustworthy, surly, valuable, hardworking and uncivil man alive; he is indisputably a good fellow enough at heart, but it would take some pains and knowledge of character to find his goodness out; but, after all, perhaps his surliness is only a badly expressed protest against the non-appreciation of good intentions, which he hides under a rough and reserved behaviour. But he is said to have broken his poor wife's heart, and very likely he did do a great deal towards it, simply because they were not suited for each other. It was not long before she lost her fresh young look, which was girlish and pretty, and assumed that pinched and fierce

expression, which tells its own tale, and is often seen among the very poor in country cottages, that is, with the women, who from pretty girls grow up to this expression of tenacious determination in the hard battle of life. There poverty can give this look, and contact with harshness and inutility can give it, too, and in much less time. It is impossible to tell how many native influences of gentle nature may have been warped or crushed out in the grapple, when we see come to the cottage door, with two or three red-faced, sturdy children hanging to her skirt, a tall, fierce, harsh-voiced woman, whom we can remember but a very few years ago as a fresh, merry, and almost childish young girl, gleaning in the stubble-fields. Now Mrs. Miles looked thus, and soon seemed changed in voice, as well as in the hollowness and fierceness of her large, bright, but still expressive eyes, and yet the carrier and his wife were not very poor. The vicar used to notice the change in her, when he once spoke to them at my lodgings on the subject of local visiting; but he said Mrs. Miles never would acknowledge that her husband had struck her, as folks said he had. Well, to make a long story short, she proved to be in a consumption, and suddenly broke down into an almost dying state. The vicar's wife, and some very pretty and kindly-disposed young ladies who lived where I did, as well as the neighbours generally (for poor Mrs. Miles was universally liked and pitied), looked after her for some time, for she was very lonely; but it was soon thought best to get her into the hospital at E—; the old squire, Col. Powis, gave an order for admission, and she went.

The carrier's cart used to go to the railway station at H— on three alternate days in the week, and on the other three to E—. Turk stuck to his post on the cart, but when Miles had to go to the hospital to see his wife, which he did every day that he went to E—, Turk always went with him, and after the first or second visit, was allowed to jump on the bed, and put his head under his mistress's thin hand, where he kept it affectionately till the moment of Miles's departure.

One night, when Miles had come in from the railway station at H—, and had to put his horse up, finally leaving Turk in the trough and shut in the stable, the coach came in rather late, and the conductor brought Miles word that his wife was dying, and that he must hurry off to E— by the quickest possible way if he wished to see her alive. The horse was tired, and Miles did want to go by the quickest possible way; so he went to old Cutler, the butcher, and borrowed his light spring cart, in which he started. He never thought of Turk, but just as poor Mrs. Miles was dying, about half-an-hour after her husband got to E—, the dog came noiselessly to the same side that he usually did, and putting his fore-paws on the

bed, drew himself up till, without leaping, he crept gently to her side, and thrust his nose under her hand as it lay upon her chest, where he rested his head and never moved, even after she was dead. He snarled and showed his teeth when one of the nurses tried to put him aside, and Miles had to carry him away under his arm ; but it was *too late*, the silver cord was loosened and the golden bowl broken, or poor old Turk might have taught his master an useful lesson, and who knows, perhaps have saved his mistress's life.

A CHRISTMAS VISIT TO THE TABLE MOUNTAIN.

ON Christmas Eve of the year 1850 a party was formed on board the ship to which I was then attached, with the object of ascending the Table Mountain, Cape of Good Hope.

Our ship had been cruising for several months on the station, and though the anchorage of the squadron was in Simon's Bay—some ninety miles distant from Table Bay—we had frequently visited the latter, and had made the acquaintance of the officers of the garrison, and several of the families of the merchants of Cape Town. We therefore easily persuaded three of the officers and five gentlemen of the colony to join our party, and, moreover, the entire party accepted the invitation of one of the latter to dine at his house on Christmas Day, after we had descended from the mountain.

We were very anxious that three or four ladies should join the party; and the latter seemed half inclined to do so: but it was Christmas time, company was expected at their houses, and they declined our pressing invitations—very luckily for themselves, as the sequel proved.

As everybody knows, Christmas falls at Midsummer in the Southern hemisphere, and the weather was very fine and delightful. Somewhat too sultry, perhaps, in the heat of the day; but we had arranged to set out before daylight, and hoped to reach the summit of the mountain in time to partake of a late breakfast, and as we did not intend to commence the descent until the afternoon, the heats of the mid-day would not trouble us. Indeed, we were told that we should find the atmosphere quite cool enough, and perhaps too cool, to be agreeable, on the summit of the mountain, and were advised to carry overcoats and wrappers with us, in case we should need them.

We, however, had no notion of encumbering ourselves with more clothing than was necessary; and we therefore declined this prudential advice. Our party consisted of twelve persons, all told, besides our attendants—viz., three seamen from the ship, and half-a-dozen Hottentots and Malays, who carried canvas and materials wherewith to erect a light tent, and baskets of eatables and drinkables of every variety, provided by our fair friends at Cape Town.

It happened that not one of our party had ever ascended the mountain, though three of our friends from the town, had lived for several years in the colony. We were therefore perfectly ignorant of the road, and were left to two of our attendants,

a Malay and a Hottentot, who professed to have a correct knowledge of the mountain paths from having previously acted as guides.

We, from the ship in the Bay, slept on shore on Christmas Eve, and at five o'clock in the morning we joined the rest of our party, and set forth on our journey from the Cape Town Hotel.

Cape Town, with its wide streets laid out at right angles with each other, and lined on either side with trees, and watered by canals cut in the streets, and with its white-painted brick houses with flat red roofs and bright green blinds, resembles very much the towns in Holland, and this resemblance is increased by the number of Dutch signs, and by the frequent sound of the Dutch language heard in the streets. We, however, soon left Cape Town behind us, and entered the Mountain road, one of the pleasantest suburbs of the capital, and a favourite residence of the merchants, whose pretty villas and *last-houses* are scattered along both sides of the road to within a couple of miles of the base of the mountain.

The surrounding scenery is also very picturesque, by consequence of its variety,—gay gardens, covered with brilliant flowers intermingling with vineyards and green fields, extending as far as the eye can reach, while in the background rises the dark rugged mountain range of which the Table Mountain is the south-east extremity. To the eyes of Europeans, however, the landscape has a remarkable appearance, caused by the rocky and sandy patches of ground which are everywhere interspersed among the cultivated spots. The fields seem to be separated by small deserts, and the green turf is scattered and thin, and lacks the soft, velvety appearance of the turf so commonly met with in England.

We travelled on horseback, or rather, on the backs of ragged Cape ponies, while our attendants trudged after us on foot, or took turns to ride in the buffalo cart which conveyed our refreshments, &c., &c., as far as the base of the mountain, about nine miles from the town where we all had to alight, and leave ponies and buffalo cart at a farm near by, until our return from the summit. Before we commenced the ascent, however, we turned aside and visited the celebrated Constantia farm, celebrated for the luscious, sweet wine, known as Constantia. This farm, which is overshadowed by the mountain, is of inconsiderable extent, and the quantity of wine it produces is therefore small, one reason perhaps wherefore it is so highly esteemed, and fetches so high a price in the market. The proprietor, or rather the manager, who lives on the farm, was, at the period of our visit, a Dutchman of the name of Boerhave. He took us over the farm, the soil of which is peculiar, and consists of a kind of decomposed sandstone, not to be met with elsewhere in the colony. To this is probably owing the superiority of the wine it produces, though something is due also to the great care that is

taken of the vines, and throughout the whole process of making the wine. Probably if the same care was bestowed upon other vineyards—though they might not produce Constantia—the general reputation of South African wines would stand higher than it does.

After he had conducted us over the farm, Mr. Boerhave took us into his house, introduced us to his wife and daughters, and insisted, with true Dutch hospitality, upon our drinking each a glass of Constantia, and moreover presented us with four bottles that we might drink success to the Constantia farm on the summit of the mountain. When it is recollected that the wine is worth a guinea a bottle in the market, this was no trifling present.

Having bidden farewell to our hospitable temporary host, we hastened to rejoin our suite, who had waited for us at the base of the mountain. The sailors, and the Malays and Hottentots, then loaded themselves with the baskets of provisions and cooking utensils, and other commodities we had brought with us, and we forthwith commenced the ascent.

This, for awhile, was tolerably easy, and we kept pretty close together. The range of mountains, of which the Table Mountain is the loftiest, do not rise to any very considerable height, the summit of the Table Mountain being less than 4000 feet above the level of the sea; but the mountain sides are steep and rugged, as we very soon discovered, and there are numerous steep precipices beneath narrow ridges, a fall over which would be fatal.

In climbing mountains it is very difficult, and, in fact, almost impossible, for a party to keep together. Some will climb with greater facility and rapidity than others, and it is natural that the best climbers should strive to beat their companions. When the ascent began to get steep and difficult, we directed the two men who had promised to act as guides, to go on slightly in advance of the party, and lead the way over the best and safest paths. We soon found, however, that they knew little more of the mountain-paths than we did ourselves; and upon being sharply interrogated, one confessed that he had once set out with a party who had returned home before they began to ascend the mountain, because a storm threatened, and the other that he had climbed half way to the summit with a gentleman who had turned back because it came on to rain. We were, therefore, left to choose our own paths, and as before we set out we had provided ourselves with bundles of little pieces of stick to which pieces of coloured ribbon was attached, those who went foremost and lost sight of their companions, stuck their sticks into the ground at intervals, to serve as a guide to those who came after them, and also to enable them to keep to the path when we should come to descend.

We found it utterly impossible to attempt anything like a direct ascent of the mountain. Every now and then vast perpendicular walls of cliff rose suddenly before us, and compelled us to make a circuitous route of sometimes half a mile, or more, and sometimes even slightly to descend again, before we could renew our ascent. In fact, we must have walked and climbed at least over four miles of ground in making the actual ascent of less than 4,000 feet.

Some of our party soon began to feel weary; but their weariness was recompensed by the magnificent prospects that frequently burst suddenly upon them, and upon us all.

Suddenly, in making a sharp turn, we would see spread beneath us the distant town, and the numerous surrounding farms and vineyards, and country seats, while in the far distance lay the Bay, dotted with boats and shipping, and, further still stretched the sea, until the prospect was bounded by the blending of the water and the horizon. Then we were immediately surrounded by objects of interest. There were the deep, black precipices to which I have already alluded, down into which we gazed shudderingly, as we thought what would be the consequences of a false step and a fall into their dismal depths. Then there were flocks of monkeys, which skipped about us at a safe distance, seemingly half frightened and half curious, sometimes gathering together, and chattering as if they were questioning each other as to the cause of such an unwonted intrusion of strange animals into their exclusive domain. [Now and then one of the ugly, clog-faced baboons of the Cape would make his appearance perched aloft on some inaccessible crag, and seem to grin defiance upon us; while above our heads, appearing to float through the air, rather than to fly, we saw a Cape mountain eagle, or a vulture, seeking for its prey.

But above all other objects of interest were the beautiful flowers that grew in profusion around us. The Cape of Good Hope is celebrated for its magnificent *flora*. On every hand were flowers and plants that are to be found only in the hot and green-houses of England. There were tulips of the most gorgeous colours, and other bulbs of great variety; geraniums of every species, and splendid specimens of the emaryllis, the iris, the ixia, and the gladiolus. One thing was wanting—few of the flowers of the Cape can boast of any perfume, as few of the birds can boast of song; and, after all, I am not sure that the perfume of the rose, the violet, the pink, the honeysuckle, and the numerous common flowers of the English hedgerows, as well as the sweet song of the sober-feathered thrush, and linnet, and skylark, are not preferable to the brilliant, scentless *flora*, and the silent, though gaudily-feathered birds of southern and eastern lands.

I have said that we set out at five a.m. At eight a.m. we commenced the ascent of the mountain, and at half-past ten a.m. a loud, joyous shout from the vanguard of our party announced the glad intelligence that they had reached the mountain summit. Others were not far behind, and in another quarter of an hour the laggards of the party joined their companions on the top of the Table Mountain.

The three seamen and the Malays and Hottentots had already been set to work. We stood on a level rocky plateau, and, as we had previously been informed, close to us were several pools—some so large that they might almost have been termed lakes, of pure, fresh, and delicious water. The atmosphere felt pleasantly cool to our bodies, heated by the hard work of climbing, and we dispensed with the erection of a tent. Some of the darkies set to work to light a fire from the furze which grew plentifully around, while others filled a kettle with water, and prepared frying pans and others culinary utensils for use. Yet others laid out the table, or rather spread the canvas of our tent on the bare rock, and prepared the several viands for the cooks. By eleven o'clock a capital breakfast was ready, of which we partook heartily, for we were all half famished with our long walk, and the arduous work of climbing the mountain.

When our party had breakfasted, we left the still abundant fragments of the feast for our attendants and followers, who were soon busily at work, following the example we had set them, while we rose, and proceeded to view the scenery by which we were surrounded, at an elevation of 4000 feet above the sea.

In our rear, looking inland, there was nothing to be seen worthy of remark. The topography of Cape Colony is peculiar—the country consisting of three successive plateaus, increasing in elevation according to their distance from the sea, and separated from each other by three successive chains of mountains—viz., the *Lange Kloof*, or Long Pass, one extremity of which is known commonly as the Table Mountain; *Groote Zewarte Bergen*, or Great Black Mountain range, and the *Niewveldt Gebirgte*, or New Mountain chain. From the summit of the *Lange Kloof* the plateau slopes gradually and almost imperceptibly, until, at a distance of sixty miles inland, the *Groote Zewarte Bergen* rises abruptly to a height of more than 4000 feet, when the plateau again shelves imperceptibly, until it reaches the base of the *Niewveldt Gebirgte*, which rises to a greater height than either of the afore-mentioned ranges. These successive plateaus present a varied surface, large plains of sand, called *Karroos*, intermingling with patches of deep and fertile soil, well clothed with small arboreous plants, and in some places with forest-trees, while they abound with

rivulets well filled with pure, clear water. Still, looking inland, the country had, to our eyes, a level, monotonous aspect; but when we directed our gaze seaward, the prospect amply repaid the toil of our journey.

Apparently almost directly beneath our feet, as if we could have leaped down into it, lay the town, some miles distant, and the bay, dotted with ships—every object dwindled to Lilliputian size, yet as distinctly visible as if painted on a map. Looking beyond these, and to the left, we could trace the lines and undulations of the coast, and distinguish the numerous coves and bays, and the narrow buffalo roads along the shore; while in the distance in our front and to our right, stretched the vast Atlantic Ocean, appearing, from the height at which we stood, as smooth as the surface of a mirror. The sun shone brightly, and the varied scenery was extremely beautiful and called forth the unbounded admiration of our entire party.

We had brought three or four fowling-pieces with us, and after we had feasted our eyes until they grew weary of gazing upon the fair sun-lit scene I have attempted to describe, we roamed over the plateau in search of game; but the birds were shy and we were unable to bring anything down. At length we began to feel weary, and having chosen a spot, thickly covered with grass, whereon to sit down and rest, we proceeded to discuss some sandwiches we had brought with us, and to empty our bottles of Constantia.

When we had finished our lunch, we stretched ourselves at full length upon the soft, moss-like grass, and while some of our party dozed off to sleep, others chatted together about the party we were to join in the evening. Some amused themselves with rolling over and over on the soft sward, among the rest our first lieutenant; but while he was engaged in this intellectual amusement, he was very nearly coming to grief. Suddenly, to the amazement of one or two of the party who were watching him, he disappeared as if he had been swallowed up in the soil. A cry of alarm was immediately raised by those who had witnessed the officer's disappearance, and the entire party rushed to the spot where he had apparently suddenly sunk into the earth, those who had just started up from a doze, wondering what could be the matter.

No one could explain; but it was lucky for us all that just as we reached the spot where our companion had last been seen we heard his voice, calling to us for assistance, or otherwise, we might all have fallen into the cleft in the earth into which he had been precipitated, and all have perished together.

"I'm all right, boys! I'm all right!" we heard him cry, as if his voice came forth from the bowels of the earth; "only be

cautious how you approach, for the sake of your lives ; for I've tumbled into a deep hole of some sort."

We stopped short on hearing this warning cry, and reconnoitring the spot, perceived that we were within three yards of a narrow cleft in the earth, almost concealed from our sight by the tufts of long grass that grew on its edges ; and advancing cautiously on our hands and knees, guided by the sound of the officer's voice until we could peep over the inner edge of the cleft, we saw our companion, his head three or four feet beneath us, clinging for life to the branches of a shrub which he had fortunately caught hold of as he was falling.

"Bear a hand, boys!" he cried, when he saw us. "I have no rest for my feet, or I'd soon get out of this confounded hole. But I can't hold on much longer."

We were awkwardly situated. Our friend was in imminent peril of his life, yet we had no rope to let down to him, nor anything else of sufficient strength by which we could draw him up. The cords of the portable tent we had brought with us would have served our purpose, but we had left the tent at the spot where we had breakfasted, at least two miles distant. Some proposed that we should tie our handkerchiefs together, but this suggestion was immediately scouted, as it was extremely doubtful whether they would have borne the full fourteen stone of the lieutenant's weight. In this dilemma there was nothing left to us but to lower one of our own party into the cleft, legs foremost, while two others held his arms, and the remainder of the party supported the holders. This was immediately done ; the lieutenant clung to the legs of a young midshipman, who was lowered into the hole, and by this means, after a severe tug, we succeeded in raising our friend once more to *terra firma*, with no other ill effects than the straining of his own and the midshipman's arms.

We now examined the cleft, and found that it extended for a long distance, in a zigzag direction, though it was in no place more than three feet, and in some places scarcely two feet wide, while its presence was imperceptible until we stood close to its brink. It appeared to sink to an immense depth, though the darkness prevented us from seeing into it to the depth of more than a few yards ; but we threw several large stones into it, and though we listened attentively, we could not hear any one of them strike the bottom. It had evidently been caused by an earthquake, or some similar convulsion of nature, and its discovery rendered us cautious lest we should come upon other clefts of the same description. Well for us it was that the accident had happened, since it had proved harmless, for within half-a-mile we came across two

similar clefts, into which, had we not been forewarned, it is almost certain that some of our party would have been precipitated.

These discoveries put an end to our rambling; besides, the air was growing chill, and we almost regretted that we had not provided ourselves with overcoats and wrappers, as our friends had advised, though we had much greater reason to regret our want of caution before we saw our friends again.

It was now three p.m., and time that we were beginning to think of descending from the mountain. We calculated that the descent would not occupy more than two hours at the most, and that two hours more would carry us to the friend's house, near Cape Town, at which we were to dine and spend the evening, and amuse the ladies of the party by relating our adventures; so we hastened back to the spot where we had left the seamen and the Malays and the Hottentots, and these latter, having taken up their loads, commenced the descent of the mountain.

To descend a mountain, however, is often a much more difficult and perilous task than to ascend, and so it proved in the present instance. The paths, which had previously appeared sufficiently firm, were now slippery to a degree, and we were obliged to proceed very slowly, while we spread ourselves as much as possible to avoid the stones and masses of earth which were frequently dislodged by our feet, and rolled down upon the heads of those who were beneath. This, however, was not the only annoyance. During the ascent we had seen numerous flocks of small monkeys, but only two or three of the large dog-faced baboons which haunt the mountains. Now the smaller monkeys had apparently disappeared, while the baboons were numerous. The ugly, mischievous brutes grinned and chattered down upon us from every ledge of rock. We never saw them beneath, but always above us, as if they were conscious—as I have no doubt they were—that they thus had us at a disadvantage; and I am certain, in my own mind, that they purposely, and with *malice prepense*, frequently loosened pieces of rocks and large stones, and sent them rolling down upon our heads. We frequently narrowly avoided being struck with a stone, which passed close to our heads, and sometimes actually grazed our persons, when there were none of our own party above us; and on looking up we would see one of these hideous brutes peeping over a ledge of rock, and grinning maliciously at us, showing the whole of his large white teeth, as if he enjoyed the joke, as I have no doubt he did. Some, upon being thus discovered, would scamper away, chattering as they went, while others would remain, well

satisfied that our threats were impotent, and that if we attempted to pursue them they could easily make their escape.

However, with all these little drawbacks, we descended with tolerable rapidity, and in little more than an hour from the time at which we had commenced the descent we stood on the broad plateau on which we had rested during the ascent in the morning. Many of our party were somewhat out of breath, we therefore remained to rest awhile, and to take one last look at the beautiful prospect spread beneath us. To our surprise, however, everything below us was hidden in a white mist. Nothing was to be seen of the country, or the town, or the Bay—nothing but, as it were, a wide sea of mist, stretching as far as the eye could reach. We had already remarked, during our descent, that the atmosphere was less clear than it had been, and had attributed the change to the gathering shades of evening, though we had thought it early for these changes to make their appearance. Now, however, even as we stood, we could see the mist growing thicker and thicker, and apparently rising towards us.

“By Jove! we must make haste,” cried one of our party; “or we shall be lost in the fog before we get down to the level, and that will be no joke.”

“Tink massa bes’ not tink him get u’ Cape Town a night,” answered one of the Malays. “White fog him come. Hide eberyting. Massa no wantee lose he life—he bes’ stay whar he be, I tink.”

“By heaven! the fellow’s right,” exclaimed the first lieutenant, who had cast a glance upwards towards the summit of the mountain. “The mountain imps are laying the table-cloth at a deuce of a rate, and it will very soon cover us.”

The whole party glanced upwards, and sure enough the white clouds, like bales of cotton wool, had already begun to roll over the mountain-top, and were descending fast upon us, while the mist beneath was rising faster and faster to meet them.*

“By George, we had best hurry down as quickly as possible,” cried one of the officers from the fort; “or we shall very soon have no chance of a Christmas dinner to-day.”

* It is almost worth a voyage to the Cape of Good Hope to witness the pheno-

"Tell massa him hab no chance anyway," answered the Malay. "Bes' stay whar him be, 'fore wuss come."

"A pretty joke to be kept here all night!" said another. "A nice Christmas party we shall make! D—n the Table Mountain, and the table-cloth into the bargain, say I."

"Let us try to get down, at all hazards," said the young midshipman who had been lowered into the cleft to save the first lieutenant. "My legs have been stretched to that degree that I fancy I could wear Jack the Giant-killer's seven-leagued boots."

"No, Tom," replied the lieutenant, with whom the young middy was a favourite. "The Malay is right, and we are lucky to have reached this plateau. We shall be safe here, at all events, until the mists clears up; and if we attempt to descend further, some, if not all of us, will lose our lives by falling into the ravines. I've had one fall to-day, and that's enough for me."

"Then you propose that we bivouac here for the night!" cried the so'ger officer, who had previously spoken. "A precious cool spot, certainly, to spend the Christmas in. It'll put us in mind of the weather in Old England. D—n the Table Mountain, I say."

"Oh, yes! D—n the Table Mountain, by all means, if that will afford you any satisfaction," replied the lieutenant; "but we are in for it, and no mistake, and the best thing we can do is to try to make ourselves as comfortable as possible before matters grow worse."

"We shall have the table-cloth laid for our Christmas dinner, though we miss the roast beef and plum-pudding," put in the young middy. And thus, amidst jokes and growls, and I am sorry to add, not a few curses, we proceeded to examine into the state of affairs. In the first place, we were beginning to feel hungry, and the prospect of losing our anticipated Christmas dinner made us feel hungrier still; while on looking into the condition of our larder, we found that there was hardly enough left of the provision that we had brought with us to make a meal for three hungry men. What there was, however, was as fairly as possible divided amongst us and consumed forthwith; otherwise, in all probability, the Malays and Hottentots would very soon have consumed it themselves; but they had their fair share with the rest of us.

"Pity that the days of miracles are past," said the middy, who would have his joke under any circumstances, caring little what it was he turned into a jest. "We might then imagine we had dined heartily, and have enough left to fill our baskets into the bargain."

"Tom," said the lieutenant, seriously, "I have no objection

to a joke ; but mark me, boy, never let me hear you make a jest of any sacred subject again."

"I meant no harm, sir," replied the boy, who keenly felt the rebuke thus publicly given.

"I dare say not," answered the lieutenant, kindly ; "but you have a bad habit of joking at everything. Now, gentlemen," he added, addressing the party generally ; "these mountain fogs sometimes last for many hours. We had better spread our tent, and take shelter beneath it ; and all we can do then will be to wait, as patiently as we may, until the atmosphere clears up. I am sorry to say that I give up all hope of eating my Christmas dinner in Cape Town this evening."

"Or anywhere else," added another of the party.

"What will my poor wife and the rest of the ladies think, when they find that we do not join them?" said the gentleman at whose villa we were to have dined.

"They will see the table-cloth on the mountain, and know the cause of our detention," replied the first lieutenant.

"Yes, if that were all," continued the merchant ; "if they could be satisfied of our safety. But they will surmise all sorts of evil, and fancy that we have fallen over some of the precipices."

"Well, well ; we can't help that," answered the lieutenant. "We may be thankful," he added, "that such is not the case ; and Mrs. B— and the other ladies will only be the more rejoiced when, please God, they see you return in safety to-morrow."

By this time the cloud had grown so dense that we were utterly unable to discern the outlines of each other's persons at the distance of three feet, and the air was every moment growing perceptibly colder. The sailors, assisted by the Malays and Hottentots, had succeeded, under the direction of the first lieutenant, in erecting the tent, which was about five feet in height, and large enough to contain our entire party, crowded close together. We deeply regretted, now, that we had declined to bring the overcoats and wrappers that had been urged upon us by our friends, and, at the same time, rejoiced that the ladies had declined to join our party ; for in less than half-an-hour the cold was so severe that our teeth chattered in our heads, our fingers tingled, and we shivered in every limb.

Our feelings were strange. We seemed to be perched in mid-air, surrounded by the clouds ; while, from whatever cause I cannot say, but we all felt a sensation as though the plateau upon which we were grouped was floating in the air. In fact, this sensation was so apparent to our imaginations that some of our party became alarmed, and believed that the plateau was actually shifting its

position, and that we should find ourselves hurled over the precipice into the abyss beneath, and perhaps crushed and buried by the falling earth.

Anticipating heavy gusts of wind, the lieutenant had directed the tent to be erected close under the brow of the overhanging acclivity, and as far from the edge of the plateau as possible, and fortunate for us all it was that he had so done. We had not been crouched beneath it more than an hour when fierce squalls, one after another, came rushing through the gaps of the mountain, and swept over the plateau with such violence that they would inevitably have carried any one off his feet who had been standing near the edge of the precipice, and hurled him to destruction. We, however, were sheltered by the mountain-side, and though we heard the wind rush past us, we scarcely felt its violence, and were congratulating ourselves upon our good fortune, and the lieutenant upon his foresight, when a fiercer gust than usual struck the tent, and immediately tore the canvas into shreds, lifted the stakes out of the ground, and carried us, entangled among the wreck, into the centre of the plateau.

We gave ourselves up for lost; but, providentially, we managed to escape from the ropes and torn canvas, which were twisted about our limbs, and by lying down motionless and flat upon the earth, saved ourselves from being blown over the edge of the plateau. When the squall had passed over us, the wreck of the tent had disappeared, and we crept back to our former position, where we laid ourselves down, and clung one to another, all huddled close together for mutual warmth and protection. But we could find little warmth from each other's bodies, for by this time the cold had become intense, and every garment we wore was as dripping wet with the fog as if we had been fording a river in our clothing. Our teeth chattered to that degree that we were unable to converse together, even had we felt so inclined; while—equally unable to sleep—we lay huddled together, some silent, others groaning, and bemoaning their unhappy condition—all beginning to doubt whether we should live through the night.

And yet, had we been in a situation to enjoy it, the scene around us was wildly magnificent. Darkness had come on; but it was a moonlight night, and occasionally the fog lifted for a few moments, and disclosed the moon and starlit sky above, and the black peaks of the surrounding mountains. Then it closed up again, and left us in a cloudy darkness, amid which we could see the fog lifted, as it were, by whirlwinds, and driven by the gusts of wind in different directions, until two adverse gusts would clash and intermingle with a fierce rushing noise, and

sweep rapidly on together, dividing and forcing a passage through the dense mist that rested on the mountain-side. Once, for a moment, the town and country beneath us, and the bay and the shipping in the distance, were suddenly disclosed to our view, and disappeared as suddenly, as if they had been swallowed up by some supernatural means, and then all was strange, cloudy darkness again.

We lay thus for several hours, when, at length, the fog gradually, and then more rapidly, began to clear away, and another hour not a vestige of it remained. The moon had gone down, but the stars shone out gloriously in the dark sky overhead, and disclosed every portion of the surrounding scenery as clearly as if it were daylight. The stars in the southern hemisphere are not scattered throughout the entire arc of the heavens as in the northern hemisphere. There are many dark patches in which not a solitary star is visible; but grouped together in constellations, they appear—perhaps by contrast with the surrounding dark patches—to shine more brightly. At all events, they gave sufficient light to enable us to read the smallest print, had we been so inclined, and had anything to read.

On looking at our watches, we found that it was just three o'clock a.m. We had, consequently, been nearly twelve hours imprisoned in the fog; and now, amid our rejoicing at our escape, our first thought was to descend from the plateau as quickly as possible, and rejoin our no-doubt-anxious friends, and get something to eat, for we were all almost famished with hunger and cold. On endeavouring to move, however, we found our limbs so stiff and cramped that we felt it would be madness on our part to risk the descent over the now damp and slippery rocks and soil until our bodies had somewhat recovered their elasticity. We therefore set to work to rub each others' backs and limbs with all our might, to restore the circulation, and then, after awhile, paced to and fro on the plateau, and thus another hour passed away before we found ourselves in a condition to recommence the descent. Day was now dawning, and directing our followers to throw away or leave behind them the empty baskets, and the other lumber they had hitherto carried, in order that they, as well as ourselves, might use their limbs freely, we started on our way.

As we expected, the descent was perilous. In some places the rocky paths were as slippery as ice, and we met with many falls. However, shortly after six o'clock on the morning of the 26th of December, we stood once more on level ground, beneath the mountain. We hastened at once to the farm where we had left our ponies and the buffalo-cart, on the previous morning; but just as

we reached the house we saw a party our friends from Cape Town, coming towards us, accompanied by servants carrying ropes, and ladders, and pickaxes, and shovels. They raised a loud shout of joy as soon as they perceived us, to which we responded, and as we met together they inquired eagerly whether all our party were safe.

"All," we replied.

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed Mr. S——, a magistrate of the town; and several of our brother officers from the ship who were with the party, and several of the officers from the fort, sprang towards us and shook hands with us cordially.

"Cape Town is in a blaze of excitement," said Mr. S——. "We saw the table-cloth spreading over the mountain yesterday afternoon, and were much alarmed for your safety, though we could do nothing for you until it cleared away. But it was soon known throughout the town that there was a large party on the mountain, and the excitement became intense. Many people have been up all night watching the cloud, and as soon as it began to clear we set forth to your rescue; but, to tell you the truth, we did not expect to find you all alive. It was lucky that you had not begun the descent when the cloud first began to gather."

"We had," replied the lieutenant. "We were half way down the mountain-side."

"Then your lives are saved by a miracle. How did you avoid the ravines?"

We explained that we had reached a broad plateau, upon which we had remained.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Mr. S——; "the very fact seems to point out that you were providentially guided in your descent. I know the plateau of which you speak; but it is quite out of the customary mountain path. Mr. B——," he added, "your wife will be wild with joy when she sees you. She and several other ladies have been half crazed with grief."

Our friends had brought with them brandy and other restoratives, of which we partook gratefully and freely; and now that the first joy of the meeting was over, they began to laugh at and joke us upon our personal appearance. A more miserable-looking party, I should think, have been seldom seen. Our faces were pale and dirty, our hair was matted with wet, and our soaked clothing was stained of various colours by the earth and grass upon which we had crouched down. However, we soon reached the farm-house, where some hot coffee was provided for us; and after we had breakfasted, we mounted our ponies, and, accompanied by our friends, returned in triumph to Cape Town. We had lost our Christmas dinner;

but we had accomplished what few have done. We had been on the Table Mountain when the table-cloth was laid upon the mountain-side.

That day we all needed rest, but a day or two afterwards we all met at Mr. B——'s villa to dine, and celebrate our Christmas night's sojourn on the Table Mountain. Many years have passed away since the period of which I have written; but though I lost my Christmas dinner, and had no share in the Christmas festivities and frolics that were to have followed, I have never regretted, however unpleasant it was at the time, that the circumstance of which I have written occurred to me; for there are few, even of the inhabitants of Cape Colony, who can say that they have spent a night on the mountain-side when the table-cloth was laid thereon.

JAS. A. MAITLAND.

LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU

BY THE COUNTESS VON LAUENBRÜCK.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS recovering from a long illness, and just in that stage of convalescence when even to think is an exertion. London was beginning to be very hot, and my husband looked worn and anxious; as I sat opposite to him at the breakfast-table, I could not but see that he had grown much older in the last twelve months; there were deep lines round his mouth, telling of care and toil. My heart smote me; a moment before I had been secretly repining at the thought of summer and autumn in hot, dusty London (for I knew my illness had cost so much that we could not think of going away); and now all the enormity of my selfishness rose up in hideous proportions before my eyes, reproachfully pointing to my husband's furrowed face, and causing me a pang which I stifled as quickly as I could. Baby sat on the floor at my feet; the child looked pale and was terribly peevish; I dreaded lest he should begin to cry, for I saw Cuthbert pass his hand wearily across his forehead, and suppress something like a sigh of impatience, as the child grasped at the corner of the table-cloth, and jingled the cups and plates together, in his endeavour to reach a lump of sugar out of the sugar-basin. I stooped to lift him on to my knee.

"Put the child down," exclaimed Cuthbert, suddenly; "you're not strong enough to lift him; he's killing you." I put him down. The unwonted irritation of my husband's tone surprised and alarmed me. He was evidently ill. "You must go away," he continued abruptly, "this sort of thing won't do much longer; you are daily getting weaker."

"Dear Cuthbert," I said "don't think of me; I am quite well, and I could not bear to go away and leave you; besides we cannot afford it, my illness has cost so much; if anyone goes away it must be you. When the long vacation comes you can take a month's run to Wales, or Scotland, whilst baby and I keep house together."

"I wish I had half the money that I wasted at Baden-Baden and in Vienna last year," said he, without noticing my proposition. Now "last year" we had been on our wedding trip, therefore it was not altogether civil of Cuthbert to make this observation, but seeing he was anxious and irritable I let it pass.

We had had such a merry time in Germany and Switzerland, and had been so free of care, and so full of hope, that in these latter days I had often thought, with a tender melancholy and regret, of

that bright period, and something occurred to tell me that we should never be so light-hearted again.

"Can't you go down to your aunt's, in Warwickshire?" said Cuthbert.

Now my aunt, in Warwickshire, had quarrelled with me violently for marrying Cuthbert, the briefless, instead of the Reverend Carnaby Pym, the younger son of a Warwickshire baronet, with an irreproachable white choker, a lisp, and an excellent family living *in spe*. Really, Cuthbert was very unreasonable, poor dear fellow! this hot June morning.

"I don't think that would do, dear," said I. "You know aunt hates babies; and although she wrote to me when Alfred was born, she never mentioned your name in the letter, and beyond sending him a New Testament, has taken no further notice of us since that time; so I don't quite think that would do."

"No, I suppose that wouldn't do," answered Cuthbert, in a melancholy tone (which was ridiculous of him, just as if I would have gone to stay with a woman who ignored the father of my child in sending it a New Testament! But men *are* so inconsistent!)

"If Bertie were in England, I'd get him to lend me a fifty-pound note; but Heaven knows where he's to be found, and I can't pursue him with begging letters all over the continent of Europe."

Now Bertie is Cuthbert's eldest brother, and is a Fellow of a college, and writes a dozen capital letters after his name, and is a confirmed old bachelor of eccentric habits but most generous disposition.

"Don't think of it, dearest," said I, for I saw Cuthbert was waiting for an answer, and that, by the colour of my response, his action, in the matter of the begging letter, would be guided. "We won't either beg, borrow, or steal. I quite enjoy the idea of walking about London with you when the streets are empty (Heaven forgive me!), and there are no end of places I shall make you take me to see; there's more to be seen in London than in gadding about from place to place in the breathless way people do when they go out of town, and——"

"By Jove! there's ten o'clock striking," exclaimed Cuthbert, "and I promised to meet Renshaw at a quarter past," saying which he made a dash at a bundle of papers on the chair behind him.

muscular rigidity alarming to behold, I sat down to consider our summer prospects.

I was slowly revolving possibilities and probabilities in my mind when the corner of a letter, peeping forth from beneath a stray plate, attracted my attention, and in a moment more I had broken the huge seal and was deep in its contents. It ran as follows :

Schloss Lauenbrück, Juna, —, 185—

My Dear Cousin,

I should be sorry to think that our pleasant intercourse of last year was to stop short with the happy experiences of that period. We have left our winter quarters, and are now comfortably settled in our more northern home. My wife longs to see you. My daughter-in-law counts the moments till she shall clasp your little Alfred in her arms ; as for Fritz, he begs me to tell Cuthbert he will find him plenty of fishing and shooting. My sons, Max and Hugo, are coming home on leave, and will be very happy to make their English cousin's acquaintance. You, therefore, are only wanting to complete our family circle ; come, then, and try life on the shores of the Baltic. With hearty greetings from all, I am, your faithfully attached cousin,

LAUENBRÜCK.

Here seemed a prospect of the change-of-air difficulty being solved. I wished that Cuthbert had either seen the letter, or not gone off so suddenly, leaving me burdened with the importance of its contents for the whole day, and not a soul to speak to. On second thoughts, however, I rather rejoiced in the solitude to which I was condemned ; it would give me time to balance the pros and cons of the matter, and, having arrived at a wise conclusion, of imparting the same, with due solemnity, to Cuthbert, who is blessed with a very moderate share of patience in every-day life.

We had met Graf Lauenbrück and his family the year before, at Wiesbaden. Gräfin Lauenbrück and Cuthbert's mother had been half-sisters. When Count Lauenbrück had been attached to the Russian Embassy in London (now about five-and-thirty years ago), he had fallen in love with the beautiful Miss Monro, who was driving the men of that season, by dozens, to desperation, and had succeeded in carrying off the lovely prize. But matrimony for a dandy *attaché*, in London, with something less than five hundred a year, has its thorns as well as its roses, its shadows as well as its sunshine. Colonel Monro gave his beautiful daughter a fitting trousseau, and, with becoming fervour, added his paternal blessing thereto, but beyond this his generosity did not go, and young Fitz Lauenbrück was a great deal too much in love to look for anything more ; indeed, he considered himself the luckiest dog in Christendom, and in this opinion he was not singular ; for his bride was well-born, well-bred, beautiful, graceful, accomplished, and discreet, and had refused many a man with a score more advantages than Fritz had to offer her. However, she loved him, and that was enough. Colonel Monro, made fidgetty and irritable by gout, and the trouble and expense of a second family, thanked his Creator with pious fervour,

that (for the present at least) party-giving was at an end, and his beautiful daughter safely harboured in the matrimonial port.

At the end of two years young Count Lauenbrück and his wife bid good-bye to their London acquaintance, and after nine days were forgotten. Colonel Monro, finding his younger daughters grow up all too rapidly for economy and comfort, offered no obstacles to their several marriages, when chance presented my Cuthbert's father (a country curate) to his elder, Ellen, and blessed the Fates when Mr. Blakely appeared on the scene with proposals for Susanna.

Meanwhile, young Fritz Lauenbrück had gone to Russia, and there obtained an appointment as Master of the Forests, and so, by degrees, the young couple had almost dropped out of remembrance amongst their English relations; a stray letter now and then, giving scanty details of their whereabouts, or communicating, from time to time, the birth of a little son or daughter. Cuthbert had told me how his gentle mother had often spoken, with a passionate yearning, of her beautiful half-sister, whom she remembered as an angel of loveliness, coming into the nursery at night, in the far-off days before her marriage, clad in gorgeous array, glittering, sparkling, and flashing in her own brilliant beauty, and stooping down to let herself be touched and admired by the little sisters, who were capering about the room with tiny, naked feet, in small white gaberdines, and all the delirium of joy at defying "nurse's" authority common to the infant mind in general, spiced with acute excitement in the anticipation of the moment when the nursery-door should open, and sister "Irene" appear in all her bewildering beauty. But the sisters never met again. Cuthbert's mother had been dead ten years before I married him, and no one ever heard anything of the "cousins-german" now. Last summer, at Wiesbaden, by a mere chance, we made the acquaintance of a grave, courtly gentleman and his still beautiful wife, and on an exchange of cards found we were near connexions. Without waiting precisely to define the exact degree of relationship, we adopted the familiar "cousin," which is so pleasant in its friendly comprehensiveness, and in parting we promised not to let the lately renewed ties drop out of sight again.

My cousin's letter showed how they kept their promise. It remained to be seen whether the journey were practicable. Towards

land, Italy, Sicily, and Egypt; but I did not take time to remind Cuthbert of this—he always was such a vague forgetful being, that I knew he would forget it again, and require to be reminded of the fact every time the subject was referred to.)

“No, not to Emily’s.”

“Surely not to Uncle Halford’s!”

Uncle Halford I privately believed to be a myth, since, within the memory of the younger generation of my husband’s family, he had not been seen, but yet was devoutly believed in by his nephews.

“No, not to Uncle Halford’s—but—to Cousin Lauenbrück’s! See, here is the letter, and I will tell you all about it, for I have settled everything in my own mind, to my complete satisfaction. It only remains for us to answer the letter.”

CHAPTER II.

I HAD not travelled much. Indeed, my first journey beyond the Channel was made on the auspicious occasion already referred to, when we had met the Lauenbrück’s, and, by a lucky chance, renewed old family ties. Of course, Cuthbert could not go with us. The nearer the moment for our departure came, the more my heart misgave me, till, at last, the terrors of the journey assumed almost gigantic proportions, and I began to wish I had not so hastily accepted Graf Lauenbrück’s invitation. I was rather relieved, to receive, about a week before my departure, a most kind and explicit letter from the old Count himself, written in irreproachable English, but with a certain stiff courtliness, which, alike pleased, and rather awed me.

At length the last morning came. The delights of our voyage commenced, by our having to scramble into slippery boats, and being rowed out to the Hamburg steamer, which lay in the middle of the Thames, having to scramble up slimy ladders, pushed and pulled by half-a-dozen sailors, greatly to the indignation of nurse, who, carrying the baby, persisted in entering into argument with every one she came near, to Cuthbert’s intense aggravation. “Do make that woman hold her tongue!” he said; and then he became absorbed in the task of counting the number of packages, and in examining every strap and buckle he could find.

He was just telling me, for the thirtieth time, to mind and carry my own plaids and umbrellas ashore, and on no account to confide too largely in the philanthropy of the Hamburg porters, when he was rather suddenly hustled of into a boat, and, before I knew it, we were parted. “Good bye, darling!” shouted Cuthbert from the boat, wildly persisting in taking off his hat and waving me a last farewell.” “Come, sir, sit down,” said one of the men, and Cuth-

bert sat down meekly, and wiped his face with the pocket-handkerchief, which he had taken out with some dimly frantic idea of waving in farewell. I felt vexed at being jostled away from my husband in so unceremonious a manner, and should, no doubt, have begun to grow very sentimental, but that the urgency of the case required action. Having settled myself comfortably, and wrapped my feet round with spare rugs, I gave myself up to the delights of looking about me, and smelling the river. I must confess the latter diversion was, at that time, anything but delectable. Fearing lest the child should catch diphtheria, I sent him and his nurse down into the cabin, and then, with my mind at peace, prepared to receive impressions. There was considerable enjoyment in that sail (?) down the Thames, through the avenues of shipping, those argosies of England; London's Tower, grim in history, frowning upon us; and St. Paul's, looming grand and indistinct through the early morning mist; past Greenwich Hospital, with its beautiful green park stretching away, shady and inviting, in the background, the Observatory crowning the hill; past the pretty Kentish villages, with their white houses and invariable Gothic churches; past Gravesend, and Southend, and Shoeburyness, where the artillery was booming away, and every now and then a cannon-ball would strike the water, which sprang up in a little impromptu fountain; past the Nore—and then—why, very shortly afterwards, life became a blank—or worse than a blank; succeeded by a resignation so hopeless, that the feeling which possessed me, was—

“If calm at all,
If any calm—a calm despair.”

I opened my eyes when we got into the Elbe. Sitting dreamily on deck, I felt dimly amused by passing objects, till a man next me, in a rough coat, offered me some brandy and water out of his glass. This had all the wholesome effect of an electric shock. “It's the best thing, mum', after such a passage as we have had,” he said. I remarked that I had no doubt of it, but would rather not try. The handsome villas, on the banks of the Elbe, have a semi-English appearance, which, after a two days' voyage, rather surprised me. The flower gardens are so neat and trim, and so gorgeous in colouring, the stucco so white, the lawns so closely shaven, that one might fancy oneself at Sydenham, or Putney, with an army of Scotch gardeners lying in ambush in the background.

Mindful of Cuthbert's parting admonition, I possessed myself of plaids, umbrellas, and travelling-bags; and then, having seen nurse pushed over a narrow plank, at the imminent risk of her own and baby's life, and passed on from hand to hand, turned and twirled hither and thither, shoved from right to left, and from left to right, in spite of her breathless indignation, I applied myself to remonstrate with the army of porters who had seized upon my luggage;

but soon perceiving the delusiveness of this measure, I gave it up, and resigned myself, with a melancholy smile, to what might come next. In the distance I perceived nurse's face looming red and angry, her shawl considerably awry, her bonnet not so straight as it might have been. The impudent familiarity with which all these rapacious blouses on the quay talked English was something astonishing. I felt as though I had been suddenly struck dumb, and quite wondered at their generosity, when, after hoisting my luggage on to a droschky, they handed me in, mildly demanding "ten shillings," in my own vernacular, for their philanthropic exertions!

Away we drove, round the beautiful Alster Basin, up and down the streets, and along the promenades, for I was determined to see what I could of Hamburgh before starting for Lübeck. The shops struck me as being equal to those of London. That part of the Old Town which "the great fire" spared is, like most German towns, picturesque and dirty. I was delighted with the trim servant-maids, their beautifully arranged hair, gold ear-rings, and coquettish caps of lace and muslin, perfect marvels of clear-starching, jauntily fixed on their heads, so as not to conceal the shining masses of hair coiled up at the back thereof, and tied (the caps, I mean) in the nape of the neck, with a perfectly miraculous muslin bow. All these girls wore black jackets, coloured petticoats, and carried umbrellas and baskets.

Great wealth and commercial prosperity are, of course, the chief features of the place; but I was surprised to see how the Hebrew physiognomy predominated over the Christian, and how, turn which way we would, the Israelitish element seemed to prevail. In the Old Town, the immense amount of ropes, parrots, and bandanna pocket-handkerchiefs, hung out for sale, struck me ludicrously. It seemed impossible that rope ends, bandannas, and parrots, could ever be in such demand as the stock in hand would seem to imply.

The journey from Hamburgh to Lübeck was neither long nor tedious. The setting July sun shed its warm golden rays athwart the land, illuminating the picturesque variation of wood and water through which we passed, and shedding a peaceful glory over drowsy nature, which was infinitely calming. It was dark when the train stopped, and a sense of loneliness fell upon me, as I found myself alone amongst strangers, whose language was to me as unintelligible as my smattering of German, picked up out of dialogue-books, and in Rhine hotels, was to them. Count Lauenbrück had kindly sent me a card, with the name of the hotel to which I was to go inscribed thereon. This proved a talisman where my efforts at explanation, in a purely British accent, had ignominiously failed. In a quarter of an hour we were at D——'s Hotel, where I found a note awaiting

me, with the welcome announcement that early on the morrow, a carriage should be sent to convey me and my effects to Lauenbrück.

In the short drive from the station I dimly saw how picturesque were the streets through which we were jolted. An old-world-look clung to everything, and I felt as though I had been suddenly thrust back into the 15th century; but I determined to suspend judgment till the morrow's sun should shed the light of its cheerful countenance on the grim gurgoyles and goblin-like ornaments, which in the moonlight had something fantastic and spectral in their quaint proportions.

Early next morning, or what according to London notions would be termed early, I sallied forth to gain a juster impression of Lubeck than I had been able to acquire the night before. The marketplace was crowded with busy housewives, armed with responsible-looking baskets of goodly augur for the domestic commissariat; these matrons were all cackling, chaffering, bargaining, and gossiping with an energy totally foreign to the Teutonic character, except in such domestic matters. The quaint buildings, adorned with inscriptions, which it aggravated me beyond words not to be able to read; a Lutheran clergyman, with his huge plaited ruff, square Geneva cap, and long black gown; the evolutions of a family of storks, whose grotesque movements seemed so much in keeping with their quaint surroundings, that they evidently knew something of the theory of the "fitness of things;" the splendid Marian Kirche and its picturesque surroundings,—all so riveted my attention, that it was some time before the consciousness of being followed and stared at, dawned upon me. On discovering this fact I beat a hasty retreat to the hotel; but nurse, who rather enjoyed her popularity, pursued the even tenor of her way, followed by a long train of the street-youth of Lubeck, mixed with peasants, women, and a sprinkling of carious housewives.

I regretted, finding Lübeck to be so quaint and picturesque a place, that I had not studied my "Murray," and had even lost my "Bradshaw" somewhere *en route*. Quite by chance I discovered Holbein's "Dance of Death" in one of the churches, and that Sir Godfrey Kneller was born here. At a later period, when I revisited Lubeck, it was in the society of one who was well able to point out and explain to me its antiquities and archæological treasures, many of them not less interesting than those of Brunswick, or the still better known relics of Nuremberg, Würzburg, Salzburg, or Innsprück.

CHAPTER III.

A STRANGE, lumbering, antiquated vehicle stood before the hotel door, and, mounting guard upon it, a still stranger foreign servant,

who to my unsophisticated eyes appeared half general-officer, half policeman, with miscellaneous attributes of the bandit nature. In his hand he held an extensive cocked hat, from which waved a sumptuous bunch of cock's plumes: his livery had a thoroughly military character, be-frogged and be-laced quite regardless of expense, and completed by the somewhat alarming additions of epaulettes, sword, and spurs; whilst a huge moustache, twisted into appropriate bristleness, gave a fierce character to his otherwise friendly face. He presented me with his credentials in the shape of a letter from Countess Lauenbrück; and as I had no words at command, and felt that pantomime would be ridiculous, I clambered, not without misgivings into the conveyance which had been sent for us, muttering fervent aspirations to the gods that my neatly-strapped trunks, which I saw hanging in mid-air, "promiscuous-like," as nurse said, all over the outside of our chariot, might not come to grief.

Standing with one foot on the steps, and baby in her arms, it appeared to me that nurse contemplated argument; but I frustrated her design by taking the child away from her, and bade her, somewhat peremptorily, come in and sit down. A number of idlers had congregated around us, staring at every detail attending our exodus with that peculiar contemplative stolidity which, more or less, distinguishes all the peoples of Northern Germany. Long and many were the words which had to be uttered before we got finally under weigh. And here let me observe that my first impressions as regards the German people (I do not speak of those beaten routes of the Rhine, or of Dresden, Heidelberg, or Munich, where an Englishman is no rarity, but of the remoter and comparatively untrodden districts) have been lasting ones. After five years sojourn in the country, I no longer wonder when, arriving at some small German town, I see whole groups of idlers turn out, listlessly gaping at the strangers who have come amongst them, staring in vague speculation at every detail of their luggage, dress, and surroundings, with an expression, half-distrust, half-wonder on their mild, phlegmatic countenances. These good people all seem to have so much time; they are never in a hurry about anything; and the wonder is that Germans, who, in their own country, are so exasperatingly slow and dilatory, make the best colonists in the world, and almost always prosper and grow rich in a foreign land. I believe all the sugar-bakers, two-thirds of the bakers, and half the tailors in London, are Germans. Seeing this extraordinary "contemplativeness" of character, to use a mild term, I was especially surprised at the volubility of the lower orders, when once a motive sufficiently strong to rouse them from their native phlegm caused them to open their mouths. All classes in Germany (as a rule) talk at the top of

their very powerful voices ; no man thinks of waiting for his neighbour to finish the observations he has begun, in order to reply to them ; every one talks at once, the object seeming to be to make oneself heard at any cost. Take a café, a steamer, a railway carriage, or any place of public resort where two or three Teutons are gathered together, and the result will be—vociferous. The wonder is that a people so essentially musical as the German should not suffer from, or even appear aware of, the most discordant sounds in social life. Their language is a grand one, full of sonorous tones, and possessing a rugged nobility peculiarly its own ; it has glorious harmonious swells, warm intonations, and tender inflexions, melodious beyond all words. Even the much-abused gutturals give infinitely more character to the language than they detract from its sweetness. German spoken with a pure accent is delightful to the ear, but German shouted forth in horrible confusion of sound, and in every possible variety of dialect and accent—Austrian, Prussian, Bavarian, Saxon, and Hanoverian—is, to say the least of it, bewildering to the uninitiated. I have frequently heard Germans themselves, less hardily organised, complain, after a dinner party, or on returning from their clubs, of a lamentable confusion of ideas, the result of an hour or two spent amongst those of stronger fibre than themselves, and culminating, for the imperfectly organised, in nervous headache. Travelling back from effects to causes, I can only find the key to this mystery in the fact that iron nerves, superabundant animal life, and perhaps the want of those finer touches of civilisation which teach the sensitive Englishman to hush his voice in clubs and theatres, in public gardens, and in picture galleries, have all their share in this (to us) unpleasant peculiarity. But I am digressing : let us return to our sheep. The quaint ark on wheels, in which we are patiently sitting all this time, surrounded by an admiring populace (for I imagine Johann's livery must have called forth secret approbation, though no outward signs of this tribute to his magnificence were shown), is still stationary. With an abject philosophy, mean beyond words, I endeavour to appear cheerful and at ease ; I draw my head carefully through the isosceles triangle, representing a window, when a sudden jerk throws me back into the "fond" of this ruthless vehicle ; a few grinding, gnashing sounds from the postilion, which I take to be expletives ; a few, to me utterly unintelligible, graceful farewell amenities, between the populace and my military friend on the box ; a squeaking of wheels, a bump, a lurch, and a jolt, and we are at last fairly under weigh.

Nurse, awed into silence by the novelty of the situation, forgot to be cantankerous, and looked quite pale and meek. "There are hidden blessings, undreamt of in our philosophy, in many a trial,"

thought I, and felt consoled for much that had gone before, but which does not stand in these chronicles. What will not one, however, endure for the sake of one's children?

"Is it very dangerous, mum?" she asked, after a few minutes.

"What dangerous?" said I.

"The road, mum."

Now, as we were bowling along a splendid high-road behind four Mecklenburgh thorough-breeds, I looked at the woman in surprise, and began to fear that imbecility was creeping over her.

"The road?" I repeated.

"Yes, mum, or else why does he" (pointing to the *chasseur*) "wear a cocked hat, and sword, and epaulettes? I have heard as there was robbers in foreign parts; but I didn't think that you was a-coming to such a savage country, ma'am, with the blessed child, too, so innocent-like and unsuspecting." (She pronounced "savage" "savage," and began to snuffle when she mentioned baby.)

"My good woman," I said, sternly, "that sword is only worn for ornament; the man is a gamekeeper, or a footman, or a valet, or something of that sort." But I secretly regretted being forced by circumstances to disabuse her mind of an idea which had tamed her so completely. Alas! that these salutary effects should be so fleeting!

Our road lay at first through beautiful avenues, bordered on each side by park-like commons, prettily planted with groups of trees, from among which trim little rose, vine, and ivy-covered country houses peeped forth, adorned with green Venetians, and cosy little establishments in the shape of arbours, and tables with benches and chairs scattered about in various corners of the small gardens. Here groups of ladies might be seen at work, knitting, netting, or embroidering, all in full view of the high road, from the traffic on which they appeared to derive considerable entertainment. These villas were evidently summer-houses, *pure et simple* ("sommer Wohnungen," as they call them in Germany), constructed as lightly and cheaply as possible, but made beautiful (if not for ever) with paint, white-wash, stucco, and pretty muslin curtains. This passion for "villeggiatura," so strongly developed in all foreign nations, reigns as supremely triumphant in the gloomy North as in the genial South. I have been in miserable little German towns, from every shabby street of which one could see the green fields beyond, yet, invariably, a stone's throw from the last house in the town would begin other houses, or tenements, or villas, or pavilions, or cottages, all evidently constructed only for the warmer season, and for the delectation and rural retirement of the chief butcher, baker, and candlestick-maker of the place. No matter that the country round be hideously barren and desolate: no matter that neither shrub nor

tree can be persuaded to grow within miles, the delight and enjoyment remain the same, and the bourgeois mind revels in all the unadulterated felicity of its "garden," as these small properties are called. To possess such constitutes the end, aim, and ambition of every German shopkeeper's life; and long before the legitimate season for migration has arrived, he will come, with his family, on Sunday afternoons in the early spring to enjoy agricultural aspirations and rural felicity, with the never-failing accompaniments of coffee, tobacco, scandal—and knitting; for to enjoy any of these luxuries without a stocking in hand would be a derilection from ancient custom of which no well-ordered middle-class female would be guilty.

Precedent is everything in Germany.

I have known many servants object to otherwise excellent places, because the family had "a garden," and this involved the carrying of every meal to and fro, from the town dwelling to the extra-mural retreat, and *vice versa* (at least as far as cups, plates, dishes, &c., were concerned); for the accommodation is very restricted (as a rule) in these garden-houses, and the sleeping arrangements a mystery into which it is as well, perhaps, not to pry.

Yet this strange mode of ruralising, so widely different from Materfamilias's love of watering-places and sea-bathing—of Hastings, Brighton, Eastbourne, or Malvern—is not to be too hastily condemned. It is the German's inherent love of Nature, "pure and simple" (though Nature be but exemplified by a few potatoes and a dozen bean-stalks and cabbages, for the thrifty burgher does not waste his substance in flori or horticulture), which leads him, if he cannot partake of the aristocratic delights of Baden, Homburg, and Wiesbaden, to find pleasure and amusement in a patch of kitchen-garden, and to triumph in his apple and plum-trees, when they bear earlier, or yield a larger crop, than those of his neighbour.

After about an hour's drive, I began to be aware that my bones were getting unpleasantly painful, and looking back to primary causes, discovered that our chariot was cruelly devoid of springs and padding, and that we were travelling a road so incredibly dilapidated that I felt morally convinced it was no road at all. At one moment the carriage would sink deep into the bottomless sand, the horses kicking and plunging, the postilions raving and swearing, when, with a sudden jerk, we would come out of the shifting enemy, to bump down with a screeching, grinding crash, on a large stone, whence, after poising in indecision for a moment or two, we lurched over on one side, and were only saved from falling by the wheels sinking up to the axles in sand, in a manner hopeless to behold. This distressing process, with slight variations, we repeated with a perseverance and philosophy worthy of a better cause for about the

space of half-an-hour, when Johann, the chasseur, appearing at the window, said something which I understood to be, that it was "a bad bit, but he hoped the worst was over." Not even the sight of the beautiful lakes we alternately approached, and again left either to the right or left, and of which I believe there were some thirty, or more, in Mecklenburgh, could restore my ruffled equanimity; half choked with the dust, and stifled with the heat, it seemed a case of

"Water, water everywhere,
But not a drop to drink."

Baby sat in placid contentment, grasping his bottle, and fast asleep on his Gorgon's knee; as for me, I feared to look at that austere female, so grim was the impression I received from her outline, in a passing glance, which, in affecting a cheerful gaiety I did not feel, I furtively cast in her direction. Very grateful, therefore, was I, when, about three o'clock in the afternoon, we arrived at a small inn, where we found a fresh relay of horses, and where the bright-faced homely landlady brought us out a large jug of fresh milk, and some crisp brown biscuits, delicious to the taste. Nurse contemptuously refused the milk, and the chasseur seeing this, offered her some of the beer he was drinking. Having tasted it, she calmly reversed the glass, and without deigning to speak, emptied the potation out of the window, with a grimly defiant look, appalling to witness. Doubtless the remembrance of her London porter added bitterness to the cup, but I did not offer her my condolences. At length Johann and the postilion, having refreshed their inner men with such edibles as they could find, came forth like giants refreshed, and prepared to pursue the uneven tenor of their way.

So the long summer afternoon waned, and the rays of the sun came slanting across the peaceful landscape, bathing in their warm, golden light, a country which, if without any especial distinctive beauty of its own, was yet fresh and undulating, and so suggestive of peace and plenty that one imbibed unconscious satisfaction from the view.

Suddenly a red-tiled village broke upon us; the carriage turned sharply to the right, and in a moment more we were driving through a triple avenue of such glorious lime-trees as I have never seen surpassed. The air was laden with their rich perfume, the bees were humming melodiously amongst the scented blossoms, the rooks were cawing, and in the green and golden meadows beyond, I saw a little blond-haired maiden,

"Calling the cattle home."

I felt that I was nearing my destination. On my right hand, seen doubly golden in the rays of the setting sun, and from beneath the "dim religious light" of these superb Gothic aisles, lay the waving cornfields. On the left, a broad silent moat (apparently enclosing the grounds more immediately surrounding the Schloss), on the dark

surface of which lay water-lilies white and yellow, interspersed with giant bull-rushes. On the opposite bank, and running parallel with the avenue through which we were rapidly passing, was a second avenue, solemn, gloomy, and dim; whilst at intervals I could see old moss-covered broken-down stone benches, but no sign or trace of life. My heart sank within me, and I thought of Mariana in the moated grange.

A sharp turn of the carriage, and we were driving down an avenue at right angles to that through which we had lately passed, thus having described two sides of a square, when the horses' feet sounding hollow on the draw-bridge caused me to look to the left, and in a minute more we were at Schloss Lauenbrück.

CHAPTER IV.

As the carriage swept round the immense circular grass-plot, inevitable in Mecklenburgh, and called in that country a "Rondelle," I became aware that three figures were standing on the "perron," awaiting my arrival.

A double flight of steps led up to the hall-door, above which the family coat of arms, sculptured in marble, stood out in bold relief against the warm red brick.

"Welcome, fair cousin, to Lauenbrück!" said the old count, helping me out of the carriage, and imprinting a fatherly kiss on my forehead; whilst passing me on to his beautiful wife, he held out his arms for baby. The young countess, as Brunhilda was called, welcomed me warmly, and, amidst a storm of inquiries, condolences, exclamations of delight at my travelling costume, and of surprise at baby's exemplary conduct, the two kind ladies carried me off to my apartments, and then, having begged me to ask for anything that was wanting, and with many apologies for everything being so un-English, they left me to perform a hasty toilette. My three rooms were situated in the right wing of the chateau; the sitting-room looked out upon the great grass-plot, which, with its marble basin and graceful fountain, afforded pleasant objects for the eye to rest upon; whilst the background formed by the dark linden trees

sofa, in front of which stood a large round table and several easy chairs. Everything bright, clean, and cheerful.

A gong sounding, called me to supper ; but not knowing my way through the labyrinth of passages, I thought it more prudent to remain where I was until some one came to fetch me. In a few minutes a light tap at the door, followed by Brunhilda's bright face, put an end to my difficulties. Drawing my arm through her own, she led me forwards, chatting merrily in the prettiest English conceivable, until we reached the entrance-hall, in the middle of which stood a round table, with a vase of flowers in the centre, and the walls whereof were lined with splendid carved oak, and walnut-wood cabinets, inlaid with ivory, devoted, as I afterwards found, to the storing away of house and table linen—that pride and delight of every true German housewife's heart. Above these cabinets hung a row of family portraits of various degrees of angularity and ugliness, and one or two good fruit and game pieces. Here we met the old count, who, hanging up his hat, offered me his arm, and led me into the dining-hall, where the lamps were already lighted, and the supper laid. Cousin Fritz came forth to meet me, and greeted me with a cousinly kiss, inquiring warmly after Cuthbert, and regretting his absence.

In the recess of one of the windows, which were very deep, stood a group of four men, talking. They had evidently, at the sound of the gong, risen from a card-table, which was pushed on one side, and were awaiting a verbal summons to supper. At the head of the table sat the countess, making tea ; men-servants were going in and out of the room, and a succession of dishes having been brought in and placed upon the table, the chasseur, my *compagnon de voyage*, came to his master, and said a few words in a low voice.

“Come,” said the old count, walking up to the card-table in the embrasure, where the group of card-players still stood, “Let me introduce you, gentlemen, to my cousin. My brother Karl,” and a splendidly handsome man stepped forth and made me a low bow ; his curly chesnut hair, bright blue eyes, and perfectly chiselled mouth and chin of such rare correctness of outline. that with difficulty I

his handsome brother. The conversation was animated, and chiefly carried on in English. The family sat all together near the head of the table, according to ages; the forester, secretary, and pastor somewhat lower down. This division, marking the difference of rank, I found afterwards to be customary, and whilst to me it appeared offensive in the extreme, I learnt that no one felt offended by the arrangement, but on the contrary, that each one went to his own place without its being pointed out to him, as a matter of course.

The dining-hall in which we supped was entirely of white marble and gold; at each end of the room great white porcelain stoves, called "Berliner Ofen," beautifully decorated with groups of fruit and flowers, and supported by four figures of huntsmen with their dogs and guns, some dead game completing the *ensemble*. These stoves, which throw out an immense heat, are so constructed that, though heated from behind, one is yet surprised by the sight of a cheerful wood fire, and not condemned to that gloom and outer darkness which the ordinary German stoves engender. If ever I felt home-sick it was when returning home from a walk, on a chilly winter afternoon, I found no sparkling blazing fire to greet me, but only a huge lifeless monumental erection, designed, as it appeared to my morbid feelings, to induce suicidal desires of the wildest nature.

On our rising from table after supper, Count Lauenbrück, turning to his fair wife, kissed her hand with a courtly grace refreshing to witness, and wished her a "Gesegete Mahlzeit" (that the meal might be blessed to her). This formula he repeated to each in turn, kissing his daughter-in-law and myself on the forehead, whilst he shook hands with the men, who, bowing to the ladies, also repeated the same mystic words, and then withdrew to the garden, for the further enjoyment of a quiet cigar.

Count Lauenbrück led me to the door, which opened on a "perron," from which two flights of marble steps led down into the garden. The moon had risen, the air was fragrant with the perfume of the lime-blossoms; on the broad path beneath the gentlemen were pacing to and fro. Far away in front of us stretched a broad closely-shaven lawn; in the middle distance the church spire rose sharp and clear in the pure air; to the right and left hand, dark avenues, bordering the lawn, shut out a nearer view of the village; but a little to the left of the church tower rose two low hills, one of which was crowned by a windmill. A soft and invigorating wind blew the hair about my temples, and I involuntarily exclaimed at the calm beauty of the scene. "But you are tired, dear child," said the countess's kind voice; "we must not rob you of your English roses, or Cuthbert will greet me with black looks; you need rest after your long journey—let me take you to your room."

LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU

Wishing them all good-night, I suffered myself willingly to be led away by the graceful châtelaine, who insisted, before leaving me for the night, on seeing with her own eyes that I wanted for nothing.

Left alone in my room, I dropped into one of the many arm-chairs with which it was provided, and gave myself up to reverie. My thoughts naturally reverted to Cuthbert in his lonely home, and I longed for him to be with me, that I might unreservedly pour forth all the strange and new impressions with which my mind was filled. I could scarcely realise the situation, or that I, but a few days ago in my own little drawing-room in London, could be the same—I, who was sitting in solitary helplessness amongst so much grandeur, in a far-away country, amongst a strange people, speaking a strange language. But I roused myself to write Cuthbert a few lines announcing our safe arrival, and having taken a peep at baby, who was cosily sleeping amidst his muslin and lace, I prepared to lay down and take the rest of which I so much stood in need.

Putting out my candle I was surprised to find my room quite light, for in these more northern regions there is scarcely any night during the height of summer, and when the moon shines a sort of twilight reigns from sunset until sunrise. Lying in bed, too weary to sleep, I surveyed my domains with a contemplative eye. The gigantic porcelain stove, notwithstanding the redundant Cupids and wreaths of impossible roses with which it was adorned, reminded me unpleasantly of churchyards, and through my troubled dreams its monumental presence loomed indistinctly, as though some huge family vault had removed itself from a neighbouring cemetery and had come to mount guard over my bed.

CHAPTER V.

BRUNHILDA, rosy as Aurora, woke me the next morning with a kiss; she held a bunch of flowers in her hand, which she laid down upon my pillow, and then skipped off to look at baby. She wore a muslin peignoir and a pretty white cap of muslin and lace, without any ribbons—this, so I afterwards found, being the usual costume of German ladies up to twelve o'clock in the day.

"Don't get up, dear, if you're tired," she said, coming back into the room, and sitting down on my bed, as though we were old friends, "I will send your coffee up."

But I protested against this proceeding; for, though still weary, I felt restless and eager to be on the move, and to look about me in this new world, into which, as it seemed to me, I had been transplanted as though by magic.

Promising to return in three quarters of an hour, Brunhilda departed; at the end of that time I was ready, and we descended

together to the garden, where, in a small open pavilion, we found the whole company assembled and taking breakfast.

"Good morning, my dear," said the count, coming to meet me with outstretched hands? "but why this ceremony? *vous voila frisée coiffée et en grande toilette!*"

As I had only a very simple morning dress on, and my hair plainly twisted up in a net, I looked round for an explanation of the count's joke, and found it in his wife's and Hilda's attire. They both of them wore caps and dressing gowns.

"Ah," said the elder lady, smiling, "those are the good old English habits which I have lived long enough abroad to have forgotten. We, German ladies, my dear," turning to me, "never dress at once for the day: at eleven or twelve we first make our toilette, and if visitors call before that time they are not admitted. I remember thinking it a horrible custom when I first came abroad, but I am growing old and lazy now, and should find it a great exertion to dress at once in the morning before taking coffee."

Our party had been augmented since the night before by three gentlemen: a Herr Von Lützow (a distant cousin of Graf Lauenbrück's), a young artist, who was busy on portraits of Fritz and Brunhilda and the doctor, who, I found, lived also in the chateau, but had been absent with the other gentlemen the night before, on an excursion to a fishing-village, where they had taken supper, and returned by moonlight after I had gone to bed.

At Lauenbrück breakfast was supposed to be at half-past eight, but guests were not looked at blackly who appeared at nine, or even at ten o'clock. This meal, which was of the simplest description, was always taken in the garden, at the end of one of the great lime-tree avenues, in a fanciful summer-house, called the pavilion. The fragrant coffee, delicious tea, cream, milk, and crisp urn bread, tasted excellent in the pure morning air. Meat was never put on table, but plenty of fresh-laid eggs, and abundance of fruit for those who liked them. Before breakfast Graf Lauenbrück had already transacted the greater part of the business of the day with his steward or intendant, and with the Ober-förster and secretary, all of whom lived in the Schloss. Breakfast over, each one went off to his own avocations, and Count Lauenbrück undertook to be my cicerone, and to show me round the place.

It is difficult to give a just idea of a large foreign establishment such as that of which I awoke to find myself a member on that sunny July morning 185—, and yet I will endeavour to do so, that my readers may better understand the quiet simple German life, such as I found it on the shores of the Baltic.

Schloss Lauenbrück, built in a valley, and surrounded by a deep moat, bordered on each side by double lime-avenues, was of dark

red brick, with heavy white stone copings, and had been erected at an enormous cost by a former Lauenbrück, who having accompanied George I. to England, was so enamoured of the heavy solidity of Hampton Court, that on "retiring from business" (after having filled the post of Lord Chamberlain to the Hanoverian sovereign for a series of years), he determined to build himself a chateau on that model, wherein his soul might take delight, let the cost be what it would. So he returned to the land of his forefathers with a train of English architects, surveyors, carpenters, and brickmakers, and set to work to fulfil his heart's desire. The dark-red bricks, of which these Englishmen alone understood the composition and preparation, he would allow to be used for no other building; and as soon as the busy labourers had accomplished the task for which he had brought them so far from their country, he sent them back again whence they came, with the liberal wages he had kept for them until their departure weighing their pockets down with an agreeable weight. All this the Count told me as, passing out of the great hall-door, we walked round the circular lawn, and so over the drawbridge, where we paused to look at the façade of the Schloss.

From the centre building, which was three stories high, the chateau extended right and left in a semi-circular form; so that the extreme points, or horns of the crescent, which the mass of buildings formed, stood well forward on the banks of the moat; whilst the entire block lay far back, and was approached by a sweeping drive of noble dimensions, encircling the "rondelle" or grass plots of which I have already spoken, and in the centre of which was a marble basin filled with gold fish, and with monstrous tame carp and tench, celebrated in all the country around.

The right wing of the Schloss proper (in which I had my apartments) was reached from the centre building by a semi-circular gallery, and stood a little forward: like the centre building, it was also three stories high, and contained, besides our rooms, spare apartments for married or single lady visitors; a work-room for the maids; and a still-room, filled with huge linen presses; whilst the whole of the lower story was devoted to the use of the secretary and revisor (or accountant) to the archives, to the hearing of law-cases, and to the adjudication of the same, whereof more anon. Exactly opposite our wing, and corresponding to it, was the forester's house, in which, however, being too large for even the many olive branches adorning his table, there were a number of rooms, at present locked up, reserved for bachelor visitors, or for visitors' servants. Beyond our wing was another similar building, in which the doctor and his family lived; then came the riding-school, of magnificent proportions, followed by two twelve-stalled stables, coach-houses, and the carpenter's and coachman's dwellings; this

completed the right wing. Starting from the forester's house, on the left, we came to the secretary's house, beneath which, to my horror and disgust, I learnt there was a prison, in the cells of which, at that very moment, where I stood drinking in light and life, and revelling in the senses of sound, and sight, and smell, lay a wretched girl, on the charge of infanticide. An inky shadow seemed to have fallen on all around: the fountain no longer tinkled so merrily, the rise and fall of its plashing water sounded sadly in my ears; the fragrant air, the refreshing shades, the warm, soft breeze, the scented limes, all had lost their charm for me, and I listened with only a half attention to all my kind cousin was saying. He soon perceived this. "It's very sad," he said, kindly, "and I cannot help hoping the poor girl may get off; meanwhile I dare not do anything to alleviate her fate. But let us talk of something else, my dear; you must not come here to get sad;" saying which, he pointed out the gardener's dwelling, and then a low range of windows, where the daughter of a former pastor of Lauenbrück found a pleasant refuge; passing on to a large hall, fitted up for gymnastic exercises (a Turn-Halle, as it is called in Germany), we came to a building corresponding with the riding-school on the opposite side of the Schloss.

"Do you know what this establishment is for?" asked the Count, pausing at the entrance, "*je vous le donne en dix, ma chère!* Well, it is a '*Rauch-boden*,' and is used entirely for smoking hams, sausages, geese, and fish, delicacies of which we are somewhat proud in this part of the world. The Mecklenburgh geese, as you will see when the corn is gathered in and they are turned into the stubble, are the finest to be met with anywhere; numbers of them are sent yearly to London and Strasburg, and it is no uncommon sight to see a flock of a couple of hundred following the '*Ganse-Junge*,' or 'goose boy' who has charge of them, as solemnly as though proceeding to the discussion of important state affairs, gravely quacking as they waddle along, but never ceasing to look at the green branch which their conductor carries in his hand and waves in a cabalistic manner, utterly perplexing to his fellow-men, but every turn and flourish of which is perfectly understood by the wise bipeds following him." By this time I was very tired, and glad to accept of Count Lauenbrück's arm to my room, at the door of which he left me. I found baby crowing with delight over a large knitted doll, which Brunhilda had brought him. Nurse, portentiously grim, was muttering to herself in an unpleasant manner. "I hope you're comfortable, nurse," I ventured to say, meekly. "That's just what my lady's been a-saying to me, mum; but how can a Christian creature be comfortable in such a heathing country, I should like to know. There aint such a thing as a comfortable fire-place in the whole house; its half-a-mile to the kitching to fetch a drop of hot

water, and no use a-ringing of bells, for not a blessed creature comes, though I see a lot of maids in the kitching when my lady took me there—'just to show me the place,' says she!"

"We must not expect to find every place like England, nurse," I mildly suggested.

"Which is my very own sentiments, mum; for as I remarks to her ladyship, for heducation and hevery hother advantage there's no place like England, my lady."

This was'nt exactly what I meant, but pleased at seeing the woman mollified, I humoured her by observing with more perspicacity than sincerity, "Just so, nurse."

I was startled by an angry assault on the piece of furniture before which she was kneeling. What a temper that woman had!

"Good heavens, nurse!" I exclaimed; "what is the matter now?"

"The matter, mum, is that I have been two hours trying to open these here drawers, and, to the best of my belief, no mortal being ever *has* opened them yet: its pure aggrawation, giving people a chest of drawers to look at, not that they're so pretty neither," she added, with an attempt at satire which I was too cowardly to resent.

Taking the key from the lock, I showed her in silence the mode of coaxing the drawers to open. Alas! the woman was not altogether wrong! Why have German drawers sometimes keys, but never handles?

"OUT OF CHARITY"

CHAPTER XIII.

AT LEAMINGTON AGAIN

BEFORE we set down the conversation, which, on the 29th of August, took place between Mr. Dykhart and Mr. Ballow, it will be expedient for us to pay one more visit to Leamington. Our special object in going there now is to satisfy an inquiry which, it is possible, some of our readers have more than once made—How, all this while, was the active contriver of so much that has gone before—the able Mrs. Ferrier?

It is now just seven weeks (for we came upon her on Thursday, the 4th of September), since Mrs. Ferrier had seen Eva quit her house, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Dowlas. That Miss March acknowledged the claims of the kindred Mrs. Ferrier had found for her, that lady had been made aware. She knew that Eva had gone with them to Llynbwllyn, and she hoped that all the danger of a marriage with Richard had utterly passed away. She hoped so; but she felt no comfortable assurance of it. She had on her side the solemn promise which Eva had asked and obtained from Richard; but she could not feel certain that her son would keep his promise. It was not to his mother, but to Eva that he had given his word. Miss March might feel she had a right to release him from such a promise; and, as Mrs. Ferrier bitterly reflected, she would be quick enough in claiming and exercising the right. If so, what had the mother of Richard gained by the remorseless ingenuity with which she had laid bare (as she supposed) the actual secret of Eva's origin? She had made the disgrace, which might have remained a conjectural matter, a thing open and certain before the eyes of all the world.

Therefore, it will be well understood that Mrs. Ferrier's grand contrivances had not made her a very much happier woman. Even the presence of Richard was no such happiness to her as before. For Richard was now at Leamington again. He had left his friend Maxwell convalescent in Scotland, and had accepted a shooting invitation in Warwickshire; for Captain Ferrier was one whom all were proud of knowing and entertaining. Though many of his days were just now spent in his friend's fields, yet his head-quarters were at his mother's house. And as this particular day, the 4th of the month, was very wet, he was at home the greater part of it.

He was, as you know, already aware that his mother's great discovery, well as facts appeared to sustain it, had proved a fiction after all; and he was very glad thereof. But he resolved that to his mother no hint of the counter-discovery should at present be breathed. If she continued as hostile to the marriage as before, the news would be likely to set her inquiring and intriguing a second time. If she were coming to view the matter more calmly, it would be very unwise to unsettle her by any new stimulus to curiosity and anxiety. So, for aught Mrs. Ferrier yet knew, the dreaded Eva was living, as Miss Roberts, along with the Rector of Llynbwllyn. Where, at this time, our heroine really was, we shall know as soon as it behoves us. Suffice it now to say, that it was in a place hitherto unknown both to ourselves and to her.

Mrs. Ferrier and the Captain had just breakfasted. Conversation had not flowed freely between them. There were many matters on which they thought and felt in unison, as of old. But on the subject which, to them both, was the greatest, they were as divided in heart as it is possible for any two persons to be.

This morning the postman's knock was welcomed by Mrs. Ferrier with more of interest than usual. She was awaiting an answer to a letter she had written on the Tuesday. Not daring to ask Richard how matters now stood between himself and Miss Robert's, she had taken a somewhat circuitous way of ascertaining. She had written to Mrs. Dowlas a few inquiries as to Eva, which would probably elicit information as to any prospects which might be vaunted by that aspiring young lady. Of the three relations whom the too rapid imagination of Mrs. Ferrier had bestowed on Eva, Mrs. Dowlas was surely the one least likely to make her niece's interests her own. Mrs. Ferrier had seen enough to be sure of that. To Mrs. Dowlas, therefore, had she penned the following inquiries:—

"Leamington, September 2, 1856.

"MADAM,—Though, perhaps, I am scarcely entitled to call myself a friend of your niece, Miss Eva Roberts, yet, as you are doubtless aware, her deceased friend and protector was a near and dear relation of my own.

To the above letter there came on Thursday the following reply, Mrs. Ferrier and Richard having breakfasted, as we just now said :—

“*Llynwollyn, near Carnarvon, September 3, 1856.*”

“RESPECTABLE MADAM,—I think it only right that I should answer your very civil and proper letter of inquiry about Miss Roberts, my niece; although it is a disgraceful and disgusting duty to me to mention her very name. What I have to tell of her is everything which is bad, and nothing which is good. After disgracing us all by goings-on the most shameful you ever heard, she has robbed us of I do not know how much property, and run away from us altogether. And a *good riddance*, I must say, she is. Every day that comes brings me some fresh story of her wickedness,—known to all the neighbourhood as well as to myself. I hear, and I know it to be true, that she took up with a tall Irish fellow, of the name of M^cQuantigan, who goes about the country lecturing at meetings; and I know that *the young lady*—my niece I should be ashamed to call her—was more than once seen walking with him *at night*, and going on in a way which, as the moral mother of four young children, I do not think proper to repeat. The dreadful example she was in the house, and the way in which she set herself to corrupt my husband himself—who was deceived by her *false tongue*,—this is a thing which my pen refuses to utter. Where she is now I do not know. Where she ought to be, I should be very sorry to say. And so, respectable madam, I beg you to excuse my writing anything more on this so detestable and disreputable a creature.

“I remain,

“Your’s truly obedient,

“JANE DOWLAS.”

“P.S.—I do not envy her the least bit in the world,—No!”

“There! There’s a character for you to read!” said Mrs. Ferrier to her son, as she almost flung this letter into his face. “You have been ready to quarrel with your mother because she would not accept Miss March for an angel. Now then! Just look what her own friends have to say of her!”

Of course Mrs. Ferrier could have no idea of the terrible disappointment Mrs. Dowlas had had, nor of the consequent enmity against her supposed niece. And the fearful and complex charges which this letter contained all sank into the mind of Mrs. Ferrier like water flowing into a dry sponge.

“Now then, Richard, *was* I mistaken, when I warned you that it would bring you no good? I should imagine you will scarcely think anything more of her now!”

Richard carelessly took the letter in hand; read the first words which met his eye; then crunched the paper up, and flung it away contemptuously into the fire-place.

“A piece of slanderous ribaldry! It is just as well for the disgusting writer of it that she is a woman, and not a man!”

"It's all very well, Richard, for you to throw my letters into the fire-place; *that* is very easily done. But it's quite another thing to explain away the truth."

"The truth! Why, mother, can you pretend to see anything but falsehood—gross, malicious falsehood, in a piece of trash like that?"

"Oh, really! Then I may gather from that, that you think your mother a story-teller! Say what you think, by all means—say that I wrote it all out of my own head! Any possible thing is more likely than that there should be any fault in the angelic Miss March—I beg her pardon sincerely,—Miss Roberts."

"I will say this, mother—that you are making me think you very different from what I always did think you. I should indeed have said, a little while ago, that the implacable spirit you show was, in you, the least possible of all things."

Poor Mrs. Ferrier burst into bitter tears.

"Oh, I know it very well! I'm but too well aware how little you think of me;—what a poor, insignificant creature *I* am! So I must make up my mind to see you ruin yourself, after all!"

"You will see the matter in a very different light by-and-bye, mother. And, if I ask you to be more guarded in what you say now, it is not that you can possibly shake my determination—that you never can do—but because the more you say now, the more you will have to regret by-and-bye."

"But, Richard, Richard,—only do consider for one moment! Just fancy it to be the case of some one else, and that you were called upon to give your opinion about it. Come, now, you can hardly refuse me such a thing as that. What would you be ready to say yourself? You *know* that she is but the daughter of a convict—his illegitimate daughter, moreover. So you have no right to think it such a very unlikely thing that she should inherit evil propensities. Well, if you think all this too shocking to be believed, why not travel into Wales, and find out for yourself? I should have thought that, for her very sake, you would have been ready to do that."

"I do not feel called upon to do any such thing. And I have my reasons for knowing how little that contemptible letter is worth."

"Very well! Then all my hopes are at an end; and you bring

shadow of such fulfilment was given to this last thought of Mrs. Ferrier's; for scarcely was it uttered ~~and~~ the Captain, getting out of patience, quitted her presence, and left her almost in hysterics. She heard him close the house door behind him, and knew that she had driven him out of doors. Then, presently, she rang for the maid to carry away the things from the breakfast-table. When the latter had performed this duty, she had a question to put to Mrs. Ferrier.

“If you please, ma'am, Susan said I was to ask you, ma'am, whether the Captain would dine at home to-day?”

This was a small and common-place question; but it reminded Mrs. Ferrier that Richard had left the house too suddenly to enable her to answer it. It appeared to mark his growing indifference to her; and she looked upon it as the significant index of a painful and cruel change in him. Coming so closely upon their late dispute, it embittered her feelings to an unknown extent. Something more like hatred than she had ever yet known boiled up within her heart; and thus, by such a trivial question, were determined great and important issues.

But she must give some answer to the inquiry.

“Indeed, Mary, I really can't say; Captain Ferrier has gone out just now, without saying a word. I suppose you'd better tell Susan that he *may* dine at home. Yes,—I suppose that will do. Young gentlemen, now-a-days, don't like to bind themselves to anything, Mary, and they do not always keep their promises when they make them. Thank you, Mary, that will do.”

And Mary went down into the kitchen. Mrs. Ferrier, as we think we said before, was very popular with her inferiors. How much was known of her family sorrows by her own two servants we cannot say. But some idea of the truth they certainly had. Their sympathies were thoroughly with their mistress. Mary, for instance, never took a slop-pail in her hand without some longing to empty it on the head whose unlawful aspirings were such a source of trouble to Mary's good mistress. Susan, the cook, was as right-minded in her walk of life, and basted an imaginary Miss March in every leg, shoulder, loin, saddle, sirloin, and haunch which revolved before her kitchen fire.

Left quite alone, Mrs. Ferrier turned her eyes on Mrs. Dowlas's letter, now lying in the grate where Richard had thrown it. She drew it out again, symbolically griming her fingers with the contact. But the omen taught her nothing. She was going to indulge in a second perusal of it; for it was a satisfaction thus to ascertain that Eva had won the abhorrence of so near a relation of her own. “At least,” thought Mrs. Ferrier, “they cannot say that it was all prejudice now.”

So she smoothed out the paper which Richard had treated so

rudely, and went over it all once more. Could she extract any good out of it? That is, would it indicate any way by which the marriage could be hindered? If Mrs. Ferrier had been convinced of her duty to hinder it when she only suspected Eva of a degraded origin, how clear became that duty when the object of Richard's insane love stood forth herself a doer of every manner of wickedness! And such was the testimony which that letter bore. Mrs. Ferrier perused it over and over again.

"Yes," she thus mused, "it is indeed an awful tale of sin and wickedness. A very tissue of iniquity! Trying her arts upon the clergyman himself;—upon him,—actually upon the husband of her own aunt;—makes one's blood run cold! Then these walks and goings on with that what-his-name, M'Quantigan;—and, last of all, robbing her friends and running away!

Mrs. Dowlas, in what she said as to Eva's robbery, may not have purposed any actual falsehood. She was only expressing her own opinion as to the disposal of Mr. Gryffyth's estates. But Mrs. Ferrier, who had no idea of those matters, put a construction upon the words both very natural and very wrong. She, of course, imagined Eva slinking out of the back-door at Llynbwllyn, with all the silver spoons in a bundle under her shawl,—or under the shawl of somebody else. And on the proceeds of the robbery she was likely now to be living in some unheard-of den in London.

"And just the style of conduct," her un pitying censor went on, "which I should have expected from looking at her impudent fat face, and her shameless way of behaving herself! But what now can I do?"

The young woman had placed herself, by some sort of robbery, under the ban of the law. But suppose Mrs. Ferrier should even procure against her the execution of that law, where would be the remedy out of such a course as that?

"What would happen," she thought within herself, "if I got this infamous girl pursued and placed before the magistrate, with every possible proof of her crimes? Why, only just this—that infatuated boy would go tearing down after her to London, or wherever she might be, knock the magistrate down, very likely—like that young Prince Thingumbob in the History of England—and give half of all he has, if it were wanted, to get the creature acquitted. And the whole disgraceful affair would be more publicly

A wandering Irish adventurer, it seemed, had captivated her fancy and (as Mrs. Ferrier was quite prepared to believe) had won the extremest proofs of her attachment. Of course my lady made sure that this little episode would not hinder her design upon Richard. She knew that no testimony against her would be by him believed, and so she defied all rumour. But there must be limits even to such credulity as that. If this new intrigue could but be brought under the Captain's actual knowledge he must recoil from giving his name and station to so unutterably vile a young woman. How could this be done?

Of course the wretched girl would be circumspect enough wherever she was likely to be seen of Richard. It would cost her no effort to drop her Irish lover as rapidly as she had taken him up. But the Irishman might possibly take a different view of the affair. To be, so quickly after his promotion, cashiered for the lady's own interest, might be a joke too highly flavoured to give him any pleasure. If, before the dreadful marriage were a *fait accompli*, Mr. M'Quantigan could be roused and encouraged to push his fortune with Eva, she might be led, or compelled, into something against which even the mad passion of Richard would scarcely continue proof. So Mrs. Ferrier took up her favourite worsted-work, and began considering how she might get acquainted with that possibly useful personage, the alluring M'Quantigan.

That there be no confusion in the minds of any of our readers, we may just remind them that the identity of Murphy M'Quantigan with Bryan O'Cullamore, the evil genius of poor Mrs. Roberts, was utterly unsuspected by her sister, Mrs. Dowlas. And it had been with no predetermined falsehood, but simply from the natural bent of her own ideas, that she had put so wicked a construction on Eva's interviews with the man—interviews which nothing in the ordinary way could indeed have sanctioned.

It cleared up in the afternoon, and Mrs. Ferrier went into the town. She knew of a stationer's shop, in part devoted to the sale of ultra-protestant publications. And to that shop she betook herself on this occasion. Fortune went to meet her half-way. In the window of the shop was a large printed bill, announcing that on the Tuesday following (the 9th of September, that is), there would be a meeting in the Assembly Rooms, in order to expose—as they had never been exposed before—the errors and crimes of the Church of Rome. Chief amongst the speakers of that evening was to be Mr. Murphy M'Quantigan, whose especial *role* would be to give instances of the abominations and impurities of the confessional. This was a welcome discovery to Mrs. Ferrier. But she thought she should like to make sure of the identity before she committed herself to any course.

So she stepped into the shop. "Can you tell me, Mr. Gastrick," she said, "who that Mr. M'Quantigan is, who is going to lecture here on Tuesday?"

"Why, ma'am! I understand he is a most devoted man, and has converted hundreds of his countrymen from Popery. It's an awful thing indeed, ma'am, to see how Popery's getting the upper hand."

"Yes, indeed, very awful indeed, Mr. Gastrick. But can you tell me where Mr. M'Quantigan has been lecturing lately—I mean within the last two month? Has he been anywhere in Wales?"

"Wales, ma'am? Well, I don't know. I've got a list of places here which will, perhaps, tell us. Let me see; there's Bangor, that's in Wales; yes, there was a meeting at Bangor on the evening of Tuesday, the 29th of July."

"Thank you, Mr. Gastrick! I had some idea of having heard of this meeting, but was not quite sure. Thank you!"

"I hope, ma'am, we may have your support and presence on Tuesday. Will you take a ticket?"

"If you please, Mr. Gastrick. Yes, I shall certainly come. And do you think Mr. M'Quantigan would object to call upon me at my house the next day? I am—I am so convinced of the importance of this good work, that I should like to talk with him about it, and—and aid it, if I could. You know, Mr. Gastrick, a lady could not interfere at a public meeting."

"No, ma'am, in course not. Well, I'm sure Mr. M'Quantigan would be very proud to call upon you. It's a great thing to find anybody faithful in these dreadful times, ma'am."

"Dreadful times? Well, indeed, Mr. Gastrick, these *are* dreadful times. Young persons are getting to think themselves wiser than old ones. I don't know what the world is coming to, I'm sure. Well, I shall attend the meeting on Tuesday, and I'll bring with me a note for Mr. M'Quantigan. Will that do?"

Mr. Gastrick said he had no doubt it would do, and Mrs. Ferrier, hopeful once more, betook herself home again.

Richard returned for dinner, after all. And he strove, in every way, to console her for the annoyance which their dispute of the morning must have given her. On the following Monday he was to go into Lincolnshire to resume the visit to his brother, which the measles amongst the children had interrupted in July. It may be matter of wonder that Mrs. Ferrier did not seek that brother's active aid against the marriage which would be so disgraceful to all the family. Some attempt to enlist him on her side she had actually made; but he had not encouraged her in it. Nor was he prompted by any selfish desire of avoiding trouble. He knew how useless his interference would be. There was the most cordial feeling between

Richard and himself. But the Captain was not much the younger, and had never been much disposed to defer to his elder brother. And he had never been at any time indebted to him for monetary assistance. So George Ferrier, with a wisdom which, imitated by his mother, would have saved her much, surrendered himself to the assurance that Richard must and would please himself, and that if he were satisfied his family might submit.

The days which intervened between Thursday and Tuesday went by somewhat wearily and painfully to Mrs. Ferrier herself. With the feeling that she was but doing her duty, her strict duty, she, by dint of often repeating the words to herself, kept up some degree of cheerfulness. Duty and victory first, and peace and comfort afterwards, was the tenor of her constant thought.

On the Monday morning Richard left Leamington for Lincolnshire. So his mother need not fear his discovering and marring her schemes.

Tuesday evening came at last; and, about half-an-hour before the time fixed for the meeting in the Assembly Room, Mrs. Ferrier quitted her house, unattended by any one, and carrying in her bag a note addressed to Mr. M'Quantigan, and worded in the following manner:—

“9th Sept. 1856.

“Mrs. Ferrier trusts that Mr. M'Quantigan will excuse the liberty she takes in thus addressing him. As an ardent admirer of the zeal he is manifesting in the great and noble resistance made by him against Popery, she has a great desire to become acquainted with him personally. She therefore ventures to ask if he will call upon her at her house to-morrow. A verbal answer given to the bearer of this note will be sufficient; and, at any time he may appoint, Mrs. Ferrier will be only too glad to receive him.

“10, Roseberry Villas, Leamington.”

Arrived at the Rooms, Mrs. Ferrier sent this note by one of the doorkeepers into the room in which the speakers of the evening would assemble before they presented themselves to the audience. The large hall, in which Mrs. Ferrier had taken her seat, went on filling with ladies and gentlemen, but, on the whole, with a preponderance of the fairer sex. By-and-bye, the man to whom she had given her note came up to her, and briefly delivered himself of the answer:

“Mr. M'Quantigan says, if you please, ma'am, that he'll wait upon you at eleven o'clock to-morrow, if that would suit you, ma'am.”

“Thank you, yes, perfectly well. I'm much obliged to Mr. M'Quantigan.”

And in a very few minutes the door behind the temporary

platform opened, and the performers for the evening, Mr. McQuantigan amongst them, filed into the room, and were greeted with cheers from their expectant audience.

It was a portentous sight, that might have made an evil angel smile, and a good angel weep;—to see with how little wisdom the applause and admiration of a multitude may at times be won. It had been rather less astonishing if the organisers and contrivers of this Protestant gathering had been subtle traders on the sympathies and convictions of their weaker brethren. But they were of no such description. With the exception of our illustrious friend McQuantigan, they were, as far I ever had knowledge of them, honest and kindly natured members of society. If there was fraud in their doings, it consisted in their bringing to the work of giants the unsupported strength of pigmies.

If they rightly estimated the age and its tendencies; if Popery did indeed threaten to recover more than its ancient mastery; at least they ought to have known that the occasion demanded other champions than themselves. A power, so menacing and so mighty, they should have been quick in seeing was not to be overthrown or driven back by a womanish volubility of speech, and a surface acquaintance with history—with history garbled and clipped to suit the sentiments of Protestant Associations. And the harm these silly people were doing, and are doing yet, is great indeed in proportion to their mental strength. They, and their much more lawless brethren in Ireland, are the greatest obstacles in the way of bestowing thorough peace on that unfortunate country. Let not such estimate of their influence be ridiculed, as one absurdly out of proportion with our estimate of their sense and ability. To heal a wound may tax the utmost medical skill the world can display; but a tipsy, crazy old epicene workhouse nurse may aggravate the sore most frightfully. Certainly the Puritans of whom we are speaking are not aware what they are doing. But their ignorance is an excuse which they must share with many with whom they would not willingly be numbered. "Ye did it ignorantly" was freely conceded to the doers of that Deed on which the light of day would not shine.

How far these remarks were especially borne out by the Protestant meeting at Leamington, may be judged from that brief report of it which it lies within the course of our story to give.

A half-idiot Earl was in the chair. A fat, fiery-faced clergyman, (not attached to any church in Leamington) was expected to say a great deal.

The noble chairman confined himself to observing how well all things had gone with our nation until the act of Catholic Emancipation, and how ill—how increasingly ill—since then. To the

Earl of —, the year 1829 had converted an age of Gold into an age of Metal, which grew baser and baser as time went on. He asked the audience to contrast the peace, plenty, and internal unity which had marked the reign of George the Third, with the war, want, and commotion which had given its deplorable character to the reign of our own ill-advised, but still beloved Queen. Comparing the state of England in time past with her miserable condition at present, who could pretend to doubt that the favour of Providence had been withdrawn from us, and His blessing exchanged for a curse.

Thus, and with many other like words, did his lordship declare himself; and then he sat down, inviting the Reverend Jonas Bull to succeed him on his legs.

The Reverend Jonas Bull was the fat, fiery-faced clergyman, of whom we spoke just now.

He began by promising the audience that he should seek to occupy their attention for only a very few minutes; therefore we need not say that the minute hand of the clock on the wall had completed half a revolution round the dial ere Mr. Bull made way for any other speaker. But he was one of those orators who cannot leave off when they would; who go winding about sentence after sentence, in search of a proper conclusion, just like some wretched creature seeking an exit out of the Hampton labyrinth. He made his rash promise of being very brief indeed, “because, my dear friends, I am sure there are others whom you must all be impatient to hear this evening. There is, especially, sitting beside me, a native of that unhappy country, which owes all her misery, all her poverty, and all her crime, to the monster Church of Rome;—dear friends, I allude to Ireland. (Hear, hear.) Yes, Ireland is an unhappy country. And what makes her unhappy? Dear friends, there is but one cause for all the misery of Ireland, and that one cause is—Popery. (Loud cheers.) Yes, Popery enslaves and degrades and impoverishes every country, whereon it has set its accursed foot. What, on the other hand, is the glory and bulwark of our own land? Her Protestantism. (Loud cheers.) Yes, England dates all her glory from the Protestant Reformation. Protestantism gave her her Magna Charta. (Hear.) Protestantism invented printing. Protestantism discovered America. But, dear friends, what is the melancholy spectacle presented to us at this time? While the deluded, degraded, debased nations of the Continent, who lie in Popish darkness, and who have not so much as heard of the Bible—yes, dear friends, such is the wickedness of that accursed church of Rome, that no Papist ever hears of the Bible at all,—while the men and women, thus kept in pitchy darkness, are wonderfully awaking from their superstitious, and

scorning the impostures of those wretched priests; while the people who have no Bibles are casting off Popery every day,—this England of our's—oh, dear friends, I hold my handkerchief to my weeping eyes while I say it,—this highly favoured England, where the poorest and meanest is made familiar with the Scriptures from a child,—this England, where the Bible is read and understood by all,—seems likely—seems ready—to turn a favouring ear to the charming of the deceitful adder, and to bow down before the footstool of the Satanic Church of Rome. Think not, my dear friends, that, even on the besotted dupes of this wicked Church I would invoke the spirit of persecution. It is the glory of Protestantism, wherever it has held the power, to have kept inviolate the principle that there shall be no persecution for religion's sake. It is Popery, and Popery alone, that ever killed or imprisoned men for the sake of their religion; it was in the iron reign of Popery that the fires of Smithfield were kindled, and under which, if you go into any popish city abroad, you may from time to time behold the same dreadful spectacle now. For Popery never changes; she is *semper eadem*,—that is, always the same. But we would not persecute ourselves. Though no nation or country which harbours Popery ever has risen, or ever can rise to so much as the lowest grade in civilisation; though, where Popery has the dominion, neither life nor property are ever secure; though every member of that idolatrous Church is bound, and knows that he is bound, to commit any number of murders at the command of his priest; though treason and rebellion are part and parcel of the Romanist's creed,—still we would never attack those misguided men, except, (as Elijah attacked the prophets of Baal) with the weapons of Scripture and of reason."

The speaker then meandered into a wilderness of words, in the course of which he stumbled upon the fact, that even popish kings and people have seen the necessity of curbing the pretensions of their priesthood. Then, again, he reminded the audience that the papist was in all conceivable cases the bondsman of his priest, and could never exercise a will of his own. And, at last, Mr. Jonas Bull sat down, amidst the loud and continued applause which, for quantity, if not for quality, his speech very well deserved.

Two more orators were to intervene, ere Mr. M'Quantigan, the greatest light of the evening, was to rise and shine upon the assembly. And the first of these lesser luminaries was Mr. Clitheroe, the M.P. for the cathedral city of Halminster. He commenced by referring to his recent parliamentary endeavours to detect the plot which, under a second Guy Fawkes, was now on foot for the destruction of the Houses. Jesuitical influence had

triumphed in the Cabinet, and had hindered the discovery, which, if vouchsafed a hearing, he could easily bring about, so that none should question it. Popery was prevailing everywhere. It was a startling fact that more than one of the thrones of Europe was at this time occupied by a papist. The woman who kept the keys of the Home Office, and swept out its rooms, was, if not a papist, a constant attendant at a Puseyite church. And, with the access to state-papers thus possessed by her, she, or the Jesuits, who retained her as their tool, might substitute such instructions as would spread the accursed religion throughout the land. But to this obvious danger the Government and Parliament were traitorously indifferent and apathetic. He (Mr. Clitheroe) trusted that the meeting before him was animated by a different spirit. He would tell them one thing more, as startling as it was true. Every single murder which had been perpetrated in London, during the past ten or a dozen years, had been the direct consequence of Popish or Puseyite instigation. It was so in the case of Rush. It was so in the recent case of Palmer. The government were well aware of this, but their slavish submission to the priestly power of Rome deterred them from giving publicity to the fact. (Shame.) Yes, but it was none the less true. Jesuits and Tractarians might deny this. Of course they would. It cost them little to deny a thing. They would deny that the sun shone in heaven. (Hear.) They did put Gallio, who cared for none of those things, in a dungeon for maintaining so much as that. (Hear, hear.) There was a day fixed early next year for a massacre of all the leading Protestants in the country. (Sensation.) The Ministry were informed of what was coming; but, such was their dastardly timidity, they chose rather to fall by popish daggers than to give offence to the priests, who directed them. And, having delivered himself of one or two more disclosures, the speaker sat down in his turn, very grateful for having received a hearing so different from any vouchsafed him in the House at Westminster.

Next there got up the Rev. R. Mageddon. His *forte* was arithmetical rather than historical. And very much in contrast with Mr. Clitheroe, he begged no other question than that twelve hundred and sixty added to six hundred and six made up together eighteen hundred and sixty-six. If any Jesuit could refute that, Mr. Mageddon was prepared to admit himself in error. But if it were accepted as true, and he believed it would not be denied by any one there present (hear), then it was a proved and certain thing that the last grand triumph of Popery, preceding its final destruction, was close at hand. Yes; it was decreed that Rome should once again have the power. Let that inspire all with the determination to main-

tain the Protestantism of our beloved country. The end of the world was close at hand; let them walk in the good old ways of their forefathers, and preserve them for their latest posterity.

And now Mr. M'Quantigan got up. A few minutes more of enforced silence must, you would have thought, have caused him to burst in pieces. For, at the very first outset, his speech developed itself into a shrieking rant, which was too much for many who had most eagerly awaited him. "The warm feelings of an Irishman," his admirers were accustomed to say: "Has seen so much of the working of that fearful system in his own country, you see." But there was a serious division of opinion when this warm-hearted Irishman began reading aloud certain extracts from Peter Dens, about the confessional. The noble Chairman suggested that Mr. M'Quantigan should be content with reading the Latin, at which suggestion there was much murmuring. Mr. M'Quantigan persevered, and, at the cost of about half his audience, read as much as he pleased. It is due to Mrs. Ferrier to say that she was amongst the departing portion of the audience. But her resolution to use that man, for averting the disgraceful marriage, was not by any means disturbed in her. We may as well narrate how the interrupted meeting ended.

The more observant of the assembly had remarked, in a corner at the back of the platform, something which looked like a desk. It was, in fact, a square piano; and, as the persons in front of it shifted their position now and then, you might obtain glimpses of a very young woman seated before it. There was much conjecture as to the cause and meaning of her appearance that night. Some said that she was one of Mr. M'Quantigan's converts, brought there to testify to his success, as the bricks in the chimney bore witness to the regal descent of Mr. John Cade, alias Mortimer. Some affirmed that she was an escaped nun, and that her account of the horrific atrocities of convent life would form the last and most instructive portion of the evening's entertainment.

But when all had spoken, the Chairman announced that it had been purposed to wind up proceedings by the singing of a song—a Protestant song. Miss Whack, the daughter of a neighbouring schoolmaster, would lead and accompany on the piano; and perhaps the ladies and gentlemen would join in the chorus. Copies of the song (at a penny apiece) were distributed among such as demanded them. "The tune," it was stated at the head of each copy, "is a march, called the 'March of the Duke of Cambridge, who was a Protestant, every inch of him.' The words were given out—that is, of the first verse. Miss Whack thumped the jingling instrument, and screamed an accompaniment with her voice. There was much chorusing about "Pope and rope," and "priest and beast," and

“~~mass and sea~~,” and then the thing was really over. After all, should we not be thankful that so much insanity can evaporate in words?

Mr. M'Quantigan was himself impatient for the hour of eleven next day, as well as the lady who awaited his coming. For Mr. Gastrick, who had seen Mrs. Ferrier's note before the meeting, informed him that its writer was a widow living in a very good house, and enjoying a very fair income. Our Irish friend was quite prepared to fancy that love, and not theology, was the magnet which had drawn Mrs. Ferrier into his influence. And he came into her presence at the appointed time, attired in a way which he thought might deepen the impression already made on her.

She, on her side, was preparing, as you may believe, the best and safest way of winning his confidence, and turning it to her one great purpose. She never suspected his identity with Bryan O'Cullamore, the cruel betrayer of poor Mrs. Roberts, and also the father of her daughter. Mr. Dowlas, in his important letter to her, had mentioned O'Cullamore's employment, nearly twenty years before, in the very capacity now assumed by M'Quantigan. But, not being the most important fact of the story, it had not much impressed Mrs. Ferrier, and was now scarcely remembered by her. In truth, it can be well believed that she knew not half the extent of Orange impudence. She could not have understood, in her ignorance of controversial hardihood, that any man convicted of so mean and infamous a crime could assume, though protected by never so many folds of *alias*, the position of a religious advocate! That Mrs. Dowlas never hit upon the identity may look more striking still. But something in her nature always blinded her to anything which would extenuate the faults of her neighbours.

Mr. M'Quantigan, as you remember, had no knowledge but that Eva was his daughter. Nor had he, at present, heard of the death and unexpected will of Mr. Gryffyth.

He found Mrs. Ferrier seated near a desk, in which a drawer was visibly open. She had, indeed, been looking up one or two letters which referred to the girl so much an object of her dread. Perhaps, considering all things, it was not so very absurd in Mr. M'Quantigan to fancy that he had won a heart unknown to himself. He might be called a handsome man. He was really very little the worse for the twenty years which had passed over him since he obtained such fatal ascendancy over poor Susanna Roberts.

He had reasons for thinking that an insolent swaggering tongue was not always an obstacle to female favour. Mrs. Ferrier was not a woman to admire him for that. But she thought only of the uses to be made of him. Scrupulous gentleness would have made him useless altogether. So Mrs. Ferrier went straight on her crooked

way (as the gentleman himself might have said), and shut her eyes to the disgrace, never to open them until, dark and hideous, it encircled her as with a stream that flows between the living and the dead.

Mr. M'Quantigan made what he considered a very elegant bow, and accepted her invitation to sit down. Then she began in a way well calculated by her beforehand.

"I am so much obliged to you for calling upon me, Mr. M'Quantigan; I was afraid you might think me very presuming."

"Not at all, ma'am. I'd be proud to go after you anywhere. I hope, ma'am, you were pleased with our meeting last night?"

"Very much pleased indeed, Mr. M'Quantigan. Especially pleased with the wonderful and forcible speech you gave us yourself. I was truly sorry I could not hear it all. The fact is, I was taken with the toothache—I really believe it was the effect of your speech—well made up to me by the pleasure of what I did hear."

"She is in love with me, there's no question about it," the sanguine Murphy thought within himself. "I must encourage her a little to come to the point."

Then he went on aloud:

"Oh, ma'am, oh, Mrs. Ferrier, it was a glorious meeting which we had! We shall light up such a fire in England as will never be quenched—never, until the popish priests and their damnable idols are utterly consumed and confounded. I go very shortly away from here, to arouse the same spirit elsewhere in the country."

"Well, Mr. M'Quantigan, I hope that wherever you go you'll meet with the success you deserve. I do very much wish I could aid you in any way. But do you not sometimes feel a little weary of this wandering life?"

"It only wants a word or two more," thought Murphy again. "But she might be offended if I did it too soon." Then he said:

"Mrs. Ferrier, it's not of doing good that the likes of me would ever be weary at all. But I'd be thankful to settle down with a home and a wife. But I never hope for such a blessing as that."

"You should not say that Mr. M'Quantigan. Come now, don't be offended, though it's somewhat unusual, I'm aware, to talk as I am doing; but I happen to know that, at least in one quarter, your excellent qualities are fully admired, and, indeed, I may say you yourself are loved."

Could any words have been plainer? M'Quantigan was within an ace of dropping on his knees, and saying something which would have brought the interview to a very strange conclusion. But something in the lady's air—something much more easy to

detect than to define—kept him from taking her quite at her word, encouraging as that word was.

"Well, ma'am," he said, "would some kind angel tell me where this comfort is to be found?"

"Ah, Mr. M'Quantigan, you're like all men—very vain, I see. Now I'll leave it to you to find out for yourself. And (of course we are both aware that what I am now going to say has nothing to do with what I *was* saying)—and I very much wish, Mr. M'Quantigan, to ask after a certain young lady now in Wales—I mean, Miss Roberts."

"Miss Roberts!" The excellent Murphy was startled indeed. If Mrs. Ferrier knew how lately he had seen "Miss Roberts," she almost certainly knew the tie between them, and, therefore, the shameful history of his former life. Had she brought him into her house only to convict and denounce him? No, that were absurd. If she wished to marry him (and she had all but said so now), it hardly mattered whether his former career was known to her or not.

"Yes, Mr. M'Quantigan, I know all about you and Miss Roberts. I know that you and she are bound together by no common tie. Now, am I not right?"

"Right, Mrs. Ferrier!—to be sure, you're right altogether. But may I just ask how you know?"

"Oh, I heard it from one of the family—from the young lady's aunt, in short. And I know that your claim is a rightful one, and that you have, in fact, received great encouragement."

"He speaks very confidently," she was thinking all the while; "and I don't think he'd readily give her up. Let me get them to exchange some words, which can be shown to that obstinate Richard of mine; or (better still) let me contrive for him to catch them together, and I shall gain the day, after all."

He was quick in replying to her latest remark:

"Encouragement, did you say I'd got from her, Mrs. Ferrier? Well, you see, as things were, she had no choice but to encourage me. To do anything else would have brought on an exposure, you see. She did the only wise thing she could, and it'll be the better for us both, I trust."

"The worst that even I expected," poor Mrs. Ferrier exclaimed within herself. "The wretched girl has parted with every shred of character, and this man talks quite coolly of it to me! Oh dear, oh dear; what depravity! But it's all the better for my purpose, and I really wish Richard had done no worse." "But now, excuse me, Mr. M'Quantigan," she again addressed him. "But I know and admire Miss Roberts; and have the highest respect for you. I should be truly glad,—well, now, I'll not be

so rude as to be personal,—suppose we say it would be an exceedingly good thing, if Miss Roberts were married very soon. Now, what, Mr. M'Quantigan, do you say to that?"

Mr. M'Quantigan thought a moment or two before he said anything. Why should this lady care to see Miss Roberts married? Why, doubtless, because she wished to guard against having a step-daughter thrust on her after her marriage.

Mrs. Ferrier was more calculating and less impulsive in her passion towards him, than her self-presumed husband-elect had thought her to be. He must let the plum fairly drop into his mouth, and refrain from plucking it, even with the gentlest twitch. Meantime, he might regulate his answers according to her manifest wish in each case.

"Miss Roberts married very soon—Eva married very soon, Mrs. Ferrier? Why, I say that I know it be a very likely thing to happen, indeed."

"But it can hardly happen without *you*, Mr. M'Quantigan."

"That's very right and very true, Mrs. Ferrier. It ought not, indeed. But it shall happen *with me*."

"Well, now, Mr. M'Quantigan, just to put all manner of joking aside, and come to the point at once. As one, who led a very happy married life herself, while it lasted, I feel for all who are lonely in the world, and should like to make them happy, if I might:—and—allow me to tell you that I have a little money of my own."

At this point he really rose from his chair, and knelt down and kissed her hand.

"Blessed angel, that you are! I'll love you for ever and ever!"

"Poor man!" she only thought. "There's an honest warmth in his gratitude, that shows how desperately he longs for the means of marrying her. He'll come to no good with her, but it will be his own doing."

There was one other thing. Did Miss Eva's Irish admirer know of her absconding and robbing her uncle and aunt? If not, he might now be in ignorance where she was. So she promptly asked him if he were just now in correspondence with Miss Roberts.

"I hear from her almost every day," was his reply, dictated by the implied desire for an affirmative answer.

"Well, then, Mr. M'Quantigan, as you do not appear

good fortune until his daughter could be married, young and handsome though she were ; so he proffered a compromise.

“If you'll only believe my word, my dearest madam, I assure you that she shall never come to trouble you from the happy hour which makes us man and wife.”

“Oh, I wish her well, I am sure and under your protection I should be very glad to see her. I should feel myself safe, you know ;—what am I saying ? I mean, we should get on better.”

“My sweetest lady, now only say what you'd have me do about her.”

“Well, I think,” said Mrs. Ferrier, who was getting rather fidgetty under the warmth of his Irish gratitude, “I think you really should tempt her to write to you something definite ; not, perhaps, to fix a day, but just to say that—loving you as she must, she wishes to leave it all to you, and awaits your own intentions. Excuse me again, Mr. M'Quantigan, but I should like to be allowed to contribute to your happiness.”

“Excuse me, you angel !” as he again took a kiss of her hand ; “you shall just be contributing the whole and total sum — by my soul, you shall ! Have you any Irish whiskey in the house ?”

“Irish whiskey ?” Well, I don't know. Yes, I rather think my son had some when he was here ; I'll inquire.”

There was some whiskey, not Irish, but Scotch, and Mrs. Ferrier, a little afraid of her new and warm-hearted friend, excused herself from keeping him company while he addressed himself to it. She had a pressing engagement, she said.

And so she left him, happy in his foretaste of mastership in that same house. He had, indeed, some difficulty in believing that good fortune to be a real thing. Yet who could mistake what she had said ? There was a singular inconsistency about her, it was true, and when she seemed most thoroughly to confide in him, in the very next moment she put on a look of coldest indifference. However, that might be the natural reaction of the violence her woman's nature had been doing itself.

His own course was very clear. He must get a promise from his daughter (and she would most likely give it for the asking), not to intrude herself upon him in any wise. And, fortified with this assurance, he might win at once a promise of another sort from the widow lady, who—somewhere or other—had seen and loved himself.

He was stopping at a very good hotel ; almost as much of his latter life had been spent in such abodes as in residences of a more private kind, and his up-and-down life had made him acquainted with every grade of modern hostels, from the houses in which princes occasionally lodged to the grimy beer-shops where burglaries were planned and arranged, and husbands fought their wives.

In Mr. M'Quantigan's way home, he called at the Post-office, and inquired for letters.

There were only just two for him, and one of them was a bill. The other we will read. It was written in a feminine hand, and it took the Irishman a little while to read through, which he did in the coffee-room of his hotel, when he reached it.

Thus ran the—to our main story—very important letter:—

"Deverington Hall, Bridgewater, September 9, 1856.

"DEAR MURPHY,—It is too bad of you to grumble because I cannot at present send you any money. At least you know that I would not refuse you anything that I could possibly give you. But, really and truly, you ought to consider, that I have suffered and risked a great deal for your sake in time past; and the least you can do is to leave me in peace, until my position becomes a more assured one; and then, dearest Murphy, *you* may feel assured that I shall be anxious to bring back as much of the good old times as it will be safe and prudent for us to do. And now for the prospect which, I think, is fairly open to me. I often think of what those horrid aunts who brought me up were always saying one to another—'I don't think Emma understands her position;' 'I don't think Emma is aware that she will have to gain a living by her own exertions.'

"This was all their talk if I complained of getting up to practise the piano at six in the morning, while *they* lay in bed until noon. If the said Emma, now more than thirty, understands her *present* position;—this it is—I shall be the second Mrs. Campion before the next winter is followed by another. Events have played into my hands. Just before our leaving town, that precious Emily's flirtation with young Larking (such a stupid young fellow!) came to the ears of her papa, who straightway took her off on a visit to her aunt at Dieppe. If she—but not *he*—could have been dropped in the Channel by the way, it would have saved some trouble to the whole family, for she is a most tiresome and perverse girl. And though I have pretty well allowed her her own way (as the simplest and safest course), she is rather worse than better for the advantages she has had. But I cannot thank her sufficiently for provoking her papa to put her out of the way for a time. It has given me opportunities which I have improved—and last Thursday—only last Thursday, I got as decided an offer as a man with a wife yet living could possibly make me. I was suggesting that, my pupil being away from home, it might be no longer suitable for me to remain at the Hall. Then Mr. Campion fidgetted in his usual way, and asked me if I *objected* to remain. I told him that, with Deverington and its people my happiest recollections would ever be commingled. (And it was no great falsehood, for my life has been but a sorry affair.) Then my 'patron' went on—'If, indeed, it be so, Miss Varnish, why cut yourself off from such associations so soon? The highest acknowledgement which a gentleman can make to a lady shall be laid at your feet, if you will a little longer brighten my gloomy house!' I believe you are aware what that means. I have told you more than once

of Mrs. Campion's failing health, and queer ways;—how she runs away, at the sight of company, like a mouse before a cat; and the knowledge of this discourages company from coming at all. (It will be different by and by.) But this woman does perplex me not a little. She is not insane, and, as I am told, it is not so many years since she was as lively and as full of conversation as any lady in all the county. If she is not insane, what is she? My dear Murphy, you would oblige me, and (very likely) benefit yourself, if (as you know so many persons everywhere) you could tell me if anything queer is known or rumoured as to the Campion family. Looking forward as I do to entering that family myself, it greatly concerns me to know. And I will tell you my reasons for thinking that, somewhere or other, there is a very awkward family secret. One day, not very long ago, I was upstairs in Mrs. Campion's room (by the way, she hates me, and sees no more of me than she can avoid), and I was looking for a sheet of note-paper to write at her request. I happened to put my hand on a drawer in a standing desk. She almost screamed out to me to let it alone. She said, ‘Don't touch that! You shall not touch that! Nobody shall look at that while I am alive!’ I wondered if she were a female Bluebeard, and if the desk held the mouldering bones of her six victims. Then it seems that the property is, after all, not Mr. Campion's, but his brother's; though the brother appears really to have parted with his claims beyond the power of reasonably re-asserting them. I have seen him once. He is a very silent, unhappy-looking man, and fully bears out, in himself, the air of mystery which apparently enwraps the Campion family. To crown all, he is married, and his wife is—nobody seems to know where. He is Mr. Herbert Campion. My ‘patron,’ as you know, is Mr. Gerald Campion. Mrs. Gerald is thought to be failing fast. Moreover, any great shock might make an end of her at once. It is quite pitiable to hear of her changes backward and forward, from *his* lips: ‘My poor wife appears to feel the heat a great deal.’ ‘This fine summer weather appears to benefit my poor wife.’ It would be stupid to blame him because he has thought of a successor to her already. What with her illness and her whims (if, indeed, they are not something worse) she has left him virtually a widower for three or four years at least. She is just a corpse, only not so still.

Remember what I ask you, dear Murphy, and at the same time, do not keep this letter. How glad I shall be to find myself in so comfortable a refuge at last! Our mutual friend, Miss Kelfinch, told me (you know when), that, though she could not retain me in her school, she would recommend me to somebody else. She did not know then of what a brilliant success she was laying the foundation-stone. I fear she would not have done as much if she had but known *all*. Yet all this family mystery fills me with a strange uneasiness. However, you will tell me anything you may hear. Write to me soon again.

“Yours always,

“EMMA VARNISH.”

M'Quantigan complied with the request embodied in this letter, and destroyed it when he had twice or thrice read it.

Then he remembered that he had got a letter to write himself. It took him but a very few moments to scribble it off. It was written, as you will be prepared to hear, to Miss Roberts, Llynbwllyn Rectory, and it contained only these words:—

"The Victoria Hotel, Leamington, 10th Sept., 1856.

"DEAR DAUGHTER,—I have just been thinking that not having heard from you for so long makes me anxious to know how you are. So write me a letter of some sort. Only make it a very affectionate one, for I am a little unwell. Say you'll always do whatever your papa wishes you to do; and I promise you your papa will always do as you wish him to do. You may put a five-pound note, or a ten-pound note in your letter, before you fold it up. It may be the last I shall ever ask of you.

Your doting father,

MURPHY M'QUANTIGAN.

In spite of his inability to obtain any money from his lady-friend at Deverington, the Irishman was pretty well off just now. Even suppose his daughter Eva sent him nothing, there was Mrs. Ferrier, now surely available for any requirements.

So, at the Leamington Hotel, and living on its best, he continued, and meant to continue. Friday, or Saturday, would probably bring from Eva the loving and dutiful epistle which, at Mrs. Ferrier's desire, he had written to demand from her. And, with such a reply in his hand, he could boldly re-enter the widow lady's presence, and, by thankfully accepting her proffered hand, secure himself an easy and merry life as long as his days should be upon earth.

CHAPTER XIV.

OLD AND NEW ACQUAINTANCES.

MR. DYKHART and Mr. Ballow were in consultation together, in a private room at the "Golden Cross." It was, we may repeat, the 29th of August: and the subject of the Welsh estates had been for a time laid aside, in favour of a matter at once more interesting, and more perplexing, and that matter was—the true and rightful parentage of Eva.

The narrative confided by Mrs. Ferrier into Mr. Ballow's hands, had been thoroughly and carefully perused by Mr. Dykhart; and he and our Minchley friend were met together, to bring the whole

Mr. Ferrier's history of his adventure and in the letter of the Welsh clergyman. But what we want is—not confirmation, but explanation; and that this paper in no way supplies. We know a little more than Mr. Ferrier knew, but that little more makes the thing darker than ever.”

“Yes, indeed. The more we learn about it, the less we seem to know. But, Mr. Dykhart, you (I understand you to say) had some acquaintance with the Campion family in years gone by. Now, I was not without hope that you might know something in their history, something in their circumstances, which would give us a clue to their strange proceedings. But you appear as little able to account for their proceedings as I am. I do not regard it as so strange a thing,—Mrs. Campion's attempt (which she seems to have made) to impose a foundling on the world, for her own child. Such things have been done, and sufficient motives for such an act may readily offer themselves. But that their true and genuine offspring should be cast out into the world—that is the mystery. Could it be all the work of some one else,—taking advantage of the serious breach between the child's parents, and desirous, from purposes of his own, to get her out of the way? And this brings me round to the question, Are you acquainted with any family matters of the Campions which would make such a matter at all a likely thing?”

“I certainly cannot pretend to any such knowledge. Not that my ignorance argues the absence of all such circumstances; for my acquaintance was almost entirely with Mrs. Campion's family,—with the Somerbys.”

“You knew Mrs. Campion in her early life? and you formed a high opinion of her?”

“A most high opinion. It was a greater sorrow to me than I can well describe, when my friend Leyburn, only the other day, told me that scandal had fed itself upon her name. I could not believe it then, and I am even less inclined to credit it now. But I never knew Mr. Campion. I used, at one time, to hear a good deal of the late Mr. Campion, his father.”

“Indeed? Perhaps it might be worth while to recall what you heard of him. You know, that he was alive for several years after the marriage of his son to Miss Somerby.”

“Of course he was. I used to hear about him through Lord Horticult's family. They had a place in Somersetshire—Mould House, it was called—and Somersetshire, you know, is Mr. Campion's county. What I heard of *old* Mr. Campion was nothing very good, and nothing definitely bad. He was talked of as being far from an amiable man,—very wayward in his likes and dislikes, and ready to do very absurd things rather than refrain from

gratifying them. He had something of that character which, in more lawless times, might have made him one of those eccentric tyrants whose evil memory survives them in strange and dark legends. But living, as he did, in our own day, I never heard of his going beyond those petty worries which a capricious man may inflict on those about him. I see no way of coupling *him* with the affair. Not but what a better knowledge of the family might have caused me to think very differently."

"I should say it is as well to note down all the information we can heap together. Some future discovery may give it an unknown value. But you were just now speaking of scandal as having attached itself to Mrs. Campion, whom you once knew and esteemed as Miss Somerby. I know how greatly you desire, as I do, that we should come to a right understanding of all these strange things; or I should never say what I am now going to say. But do you think it *quite* impossible that such unhappy rumours may have had some foundation in fact?"

"I do feel entirely sure that they are utterly unfounded."

"Perhaps I am wrong to press the question any further; but, nevertheless, Mr. Dykhart, it may have occurred to you how much, in case they were *true* reports, is fully accounted for. Mr. Campion's repudiation of Eva, his wife's child; his separation from Mrs. Campion; the seclusion in which he has lived ever since."

"Yes, I acknowledge all that, Mr. Ballow, and I should not blame any one who, judging from these circumstances only, took the most unfavourable view of Mrs. Campion's character. I speak from some personal knowledge of her, and circumstantial evidence does not weigh with me so much as that."

"Pardon me just once again, but your knowledge of the lady was when she was very young, you say. Do you feel so sure that she might not be greatly and fearfully changed in after years? Is it quite safe to argue that she would always continue as pure-minded as you once knew her?"

"Mr. Ballow, I own how reasonable your questions are. I am going to make a sorry return on my side, for I am going to repeat my convictions, while offering no proof of what I say. I am about to give nothing but my word for what it would be much more just to give actual evidence. I have seen Mrs. Campion within the last few days. To tell you where I found her would be to break my solemn promise to herself; therefore, I can but assure you that I

“ But is it not a pity that she would not say what it really was ? For I conclude she did not tell you.”

“ No, she did not ; and at that time, not anticipating how soon I should meet her daughter (whom she supposes to be with Mr. Campion), I did not trouble myself so much about the question. I am not without hope that she will, in time, confide in me more fully. But I should destroy all chance of that if I were too urgent with such inquiries. You will gather from this that I have the means of seeing her frequently. That is the case.. But our meeting was, so to speak, quite accidental at first. I have had only two interviews with her as yet. At the latter of them I persuaded her to something which may prove of some assistance to us. I think you understand that, *as she believes*, the child remained with her father, or, in one way or another, under the father’s care. So she told me. And, *at that time*, I had no proof that, in this belief, she was at all mistaken ; although the Leyburns understood that *she* had taken the child. But now, having seen Miss March, as she is called, and having become convinced that she is the child, although brought up by neither her father nor her mother, one thing which Mrs. Campion told me occurred to my recollection very forcibly. She said that not long after the dreadful separation [from her husband and her daughter she wrote to beg that, if deemed unworthy to educate the child, she might be permitted occasionally to see her. Her husband wrote a refusal of her request in terms which (she declared) were somewhat perplexing to her. All that his reply made clear was, that her petition was to remain ungranted. Now, she has permitted me to take a copy of that letter. And before I offer any comment upon it, you shall read it, and consider for yourself what interpretation *should* be placed upon it. Here it is.”

And Mr. Dykhart drew forth the copy which, not many days before, he had taken of Mr. Campion’s seemingly cruel letter. Mr. Ballow read accordingly :—

“ 14th June, 1842.

“ ADELA,—I do not find fault with your desire of seeing that unfortunate child, whom your deceitful dealing has placed in so cruel a position. I think it rather commendable in you that your feelings towards her are not entirely selfish. And the thought that the excellence which I once believed your’s was not counterfeit altogether will be of some comfort to me, in the future of sorrow and mourning which now too surely lies before me. Nevertheless, I would ask you to consider for yourself, whether it would not be a foolish and selfish thing to persevere in the wish you have expressed. Is it not for the happiness of that poor child, that she should forget, speedily and utterly, the parent whom she must know no more ? Let me, however, assure you, that she will not want parental care. For-

saken, and worse than forsaken, as she has been, the Lord has taken her up. She has gained a father, while (so to speak) she has twice lost a mother. Rest in my assurance that I would in no wise inflict on the innocent the suffering only due to the guilty. The child is committed to safe keeping.

And, now, Adela, let me say that I think it better for us to keep entirely asunder. We could not be happy together. I know that the honour of my name is safe in your hands. Yet I would that we both could hide ourselves (and the unhappy cause of our parting) from the knowledge and comment of the world. I was mistaken in you, and feel as though I could never trust again. We must meet no more in this life. But it may not be forbidden us to meet again in the life hereafter.

"Your unhappy, but always loving husband,

"HERBERT CAMPION."

Thus ran the letter which Mr. Ballow now read, as hastily copied by Mr. Dykhart.

"I may just observe," said the latter gentleman, "that though I wrote this off rather quickly, yet I made no mistake in the transcribing. I was careful as to each word. And now let me ask what you think of it?"

"Why, coupling it with what we know from other sources, I cannot doubt what it was which the writer intended to express. He—that is, Mr. Campion—writes under the idea that the plan of imposing upon him the child of Mrs. Roberts as his own had been actually carried out. His allusion to the friend unexpectedly raised up for the child is meant for Mr. Ferrier. I cannot doubt—if I ever doubted very much—that the gentleman, of name unknown, who called to inquire as to the child, was Mr. Campion himself."

"Certainly! it must have been he. But then, how came he to be so fearfully mistaken? If Mrs. Campion was really privy to that abortive attempt in Scarlington House—and it is with the greatest difficulty I can bring myself to believe her guilty of so much as that—it must be that her husband thought—thinks still, most likely—that the child was really palmed off upon himself and the world as his own. Hence his unforgiving anger; hence all the misery to which he has doomed both his wife and himself. And hence it is that our youthful friend, as far as her rightful position is concerned, has been made a disowned outcast."

"So I should say. Yet how came it to pass that Mr. Campion was so readily and so thoroughly convinced of his wife's treachery?

after the discovery and rupture with her husband. But that very fact only shows that she had cause for all the horror with which it appears to have afflicted her. I think, with you, that some evil agency was at work elsewhere. If we could get hold of Mr. Campion, or if Mrs. Campion could nerve herself to give us full particulars of the affair, as known to her, our doubts might all be cleared away."

"Is there no hope of these things?"

"I have great hope—very great hope—that Mrs. Campion will confide in me more fully by-and-bye. To press her too hastily would very greatly retard our chances of success; and as to Mr. Campion, I understand that he purposes returning to England in the beginning or middle of October. He is said to be travelling in North America now. I am informed that he will almost certainly stop a few days in London, and I know at which hotel he is accustomed to stay. Now, if it be within the powers of contrivance, I should say that we *must* see him when he comes. We *must* both wait upon him, and, if we can, before anyone else obtains speech of him. We do not know who may be watching to thwart us even now. Will you endeavour to contrive this meeting with him? We must come with all our documents ready to lay before him; and we must not allow him, angry and impatient as he will very likely be, to turn us out until he has heard every word we think proper to say to him. Are you of the same opinion with myself?"

"Entirely so; and I will do my utmost to carry out the plan you—I think, most wisely—propose. But, as it must be several weeks before we can see Mr. Campion, is there nothing to be done in the meantime? Is there no possible way of ascertaining *whose* contrivance has wrought all this error and mischief?"

"I do not see my way to that just now. The person most interested in making Mr. Campion appear childless is his brother Gerald. But he bears a name which should exempt him from suspicion, and we are not driven as of course to believe *him* guilty. We do not know into whose hands his brother may have fallen, or whose interest it may have been to detach him from his lawful family ties. You have looked into the Register, at Fulham, for the name of Mrs. Campion's child?"

"Yes; and I find that on the 14th of April, 1839, Teresa, the daughter of Herbert and Adela Campion, was baptised in due form. I also find her name in the Registry of Births as of one born in Fulham, on the 14th of March in that same year."

"Then our young friend is only in her eighteenth year?"

"So it would seem. She looks so much older that if the evidence of her identity were less strong, I confess I should enter-

tain some doubt. But I do not see that the thing is incredible, as it is."

"Nor, indeed, do I. And now I recollect that her aunt Julia, to whom she bears so marvellous a resemblance, was thought very forward in appearance for her age. By the way, does Miss March—we had better continue to call her so, for the present—does she go back with you to Minchley?"

"Why, yes; I do not see what other plan we can pursue. But, for one or two reasons, I really wish we could hit on some other."

"Indeed! Will it be rude in me if I ask why?"

"I am only too glad to have such questions to answer. Why as it will scarcely surprise you to hear, of course there has been a good deal of gossip about Eva, and all this series of discovery and counter-discovery; and, for a time, it would be a great deal pleasanter if Eva could live away from Minchley. But I do not see how it is very well to be done. Now that we feel so certain that she is a real lady by birth and parentage, it would scarcely answer for her to be living with good Mrs. Check."

"No, to be sure not. My wife and I would gladly entertain her for any length of time; but Mrs. Dykhart's health hardly admits of our having visitors, and the Leyburns, I know, are going from home for several weeks. I was going to propose a plan of my own. I have an old aunt, of the name of Torring, living at Chelford, only a few miles from Deverington Hall, the seat of the Campions, you know. When I went to see her, about a month ago or more, she was wishing she could find some nice young lady to live with her as a companion. Now my aunt is a rather eccentric old lady; but I can answer for it that she would treat any young person living with her in such a capacity as her equal altogether. Now, if Miss March herself approved of this plan, should you object to her taking up her abode with my aunt for a time? It might procure her an entrance into the very society in which, if her rightful claims are ultimately made clear, it will be her place to move. Moreover, we do not know how much it might not assist in smoothing the way towards the discovery we both so much desire."

"True, I see much to commend the plan. If Eva likes the idea herself, I have no objection to offer on my side. I am not so sure that we shall get the acquiescence of Mrs. Ballow. She will think of all those terrible uncles in the story-books, who murder their nephews and nieces, as well as rob them. However, as my wife has determined that this affair must and shall arrive at a triumphant *dénouement*, why, it would not be very consistent in her to feel seriously frightened."

“Then, if you will consult Mrs. Ballow and Miss March, I, meantime, will write to my aunt Tarring; I know that if she has suited herself it must have been very recently.”

Eva, uncomfortable at the idea of going back at once to curious, gossiping Minchley, caught rather eagerly at the proposal which Mr. Dykhardt had made. Mrs. Ballow, when she heard of it, did certainly think it a venturesome one. However, all romances, with few exceptions, end well, and Eva's romance appeared to be going according to precedent; and if any terrible incidents did come out of this journey into Somersetshire, they would issue in good, no doubt. So Mrs. Ballow wrote back, that she had no decided objection to offer to the scheme, which did, however, fill her with a lively anticipation of something horrible.

On the very same day which brought this letter from Minchley there came a letter from old Mrs. Tarring, to say that she should have very great pleasure, on her nephew's recommendation, in trying how she and Miss March were suited one to another.

And the upshot of all these arrangements was, that on Saturday, the 6th of September, Eva, escorted by Mrs. Check, went down into Somersetshire to Mrs. Tarring, to remain during a month for certain, for such longer time as mutual liking and mutual convenience might render agreeable to both parties. It must not be imagined that Eva, all this while, was forgotten by her friends in Wales. It was not thought expedient, until the arrangements could be made complete, to inform Mr. Dowlas of the wealth in store for him. Not to make her continued absence from Tremallyoc too much of a wonder, Eva did inform him that she was endeavouring, with the advice and assistance of her lawyer, to contrive some concession in his favour. The nonentity of their relationship would not be made known to him until the other matters were all made ready.

To Mrs. Roberts Eva wrote, assuring her of a sufficient income for her own enjoyment; but warning her against acting as though she had become very rich. This caution was rendered necessary by the behaviour of the poor woman herself. For, as Mr. Lewis heard through old Miss Tudor, Mrs. Roberts was beguiling her lonely days by a series of tea-parties—tea-parties as gay as decorum allowed in a house out of which a funeral had so recently passed. Not as yet had she succeeded in showing the splendid tea-service to her sister's envying eyes. Mrs. Dowlas continued sulkily resentful, and that supreme drop of joy in Mrs. Roberts's cup, figurative and literal, was to remain untasted for ever. But, as there was really no knowing to what extravagance this foolish woman might be tempted, on the strength of her daughter's fictitious heirship, it was a positive duty to give her some idea that things were not as she supposed.

A day or two before Miss March went down into Somersetshire, she received a letter from Mr. Dowlas, in which he spoke of Murphy M'Quantigan. He reminded Eva how he had promised her, as a means of securing Susanna against any approaches of the Irishman, to make some few inquiries as to the recent life of the great Protestant advocate. He now could tell her that his inquiries had issued in a result at once painful and pleasing. Painful, inasmuch as they revealed fresh wickedness in a man already known to be so wicked; pleasing, inasmuch as they afforded a means of guarding Mrs. Roberts against him. "I learn," Mr. Dowlas wrote, "that this unhappy man, employing his old pretence of controversial zeal, obtained, some few years ago, an employment connected with a ladies' school (I believe he taught Latin and one or two other things); but what chiefly concerns us is, that some very questionable intercourse between himself and one of the under-teachers there compelled the mistress at once to dismiss them both. And, should he persecute your mother with any serious proposals, it will be something to have this matter against him. Your accession to so much wealth is likely, I fear, to bring him upon you, when he hears of it. It is sad to speak to you of your father as of your enemy; but we are both agreed that all your duty is due to your innocent parent. My children send you their best love."

Eva was glad to be assured that, in about a week, the whole truth of the affair would be just as well known to the family in Wales as to herself.

The evening was coming on, when she entered the town of Chelford, in the fly which had brought her from Bridgewater station. Mrs. Tarring lived in an old-fashioned house in the outskirts of the quiet little town. Mrs. Check and Eva alighted at the gate, and the luggage was carried in through the little garden in front to the house-door. At that door stood Mrs. Tarring. She was scarcely a woman whom you would pass at any time without regarding, and Eva, of course, was disposed to look at her attentively.

She was decidedly tall. She carried her eighty-four years as well as ever so great a number was borne since the days of our sojourn shrank to their present brief span. She was very nearly as upright as she could have been at twenty. She wore her own hair, white as wool, but abundant in quantity. Almost as white was the tint of her face, and though you could scarcely say that her features carried so much as the relics of any beauty; yet, so gently had the hand of time passed over them, that, with the tale of years which was written on them, they were most attractive now. She walked wonderfully; her eyesight was good,

and her hearing would have been quick for a person in the prime of life. Eva had been warned to expect that, with manners fundamentally good, this lady mingled a few eccentricities. She found the warning available at the very first. When she approached the door, at which Mrs. Tarring was standing, the old lady gave utterance to her apparent astonishment in one emphatic—"Law!"

Eva scarcely knew what to say on her side. But she was presently greeted very intelligibly and warmly.

"Well, my dear, I'm very glad to see you, and I hope we shall get on well together. I had no idea you were so very pretty. I was never so pretty as you are, but I'll tell you what—I was once as young; yes, I was indeed. And how old do you think I am now? Why, I'm eighty-four; and I've had a very comfortable life, and am very well off in my old age. Well, now come in, and have your tea, and Patterson shall show you up to your room. Why, who have you got here?"

Eva presented Mrs. Check, and Mrs. Tarring, with peremptory hospitality, insisted that Eva's escort should remain with her until the Monday, which arrangement was accepted. Eva made a movement towards the staircase.

"Law, Patterson!" said her mistress, "why, you look as if you'd lost your wits. Show the young lady to her room, and look out to see where you can put the old one."

Mrs. Patterson, who really had been looking as one from whom the present has vanished, and whose thoughts are gone back into the past, now started, as one suddenly awakened, and performed her duty towards Eva. Miss March knew that servants are not always well disposed towards persons in the capacity in which she had come to Chelford, and she was very much relieved to find Mrs. Tarring's principal servant so extremely attentive. Patterson seemed to take a positive pleasure in consulting her as to every little arrangement involved in the taking possession of her room. She looked at Eva, and watched the replies which her questions called forth, just like some one waiting for the responses of a mighty oracle. It would have been an attention almost oppressive, save that Eva's expectations had rather run the other way, and so the disappointment could not be too complete.

After a brief toilette, Eva joined the old lady in her drawing-room, and they had their tea. It was a pleasant room, with a little of that preciseness which we associate rather with old maids than with old widows. But Mrs. Tarring had never had any children. She was the widow of a colonel, had seen a great deal of the world in her time, and, what had now become a distinction very rare, had visited France before the Revolution. She

talked, during tea, of this and kindred matters. When it was over, she entered on things more directly concerning the immediate present.

The old lady sat back in an arm-chair, with a large book on an easel before her; but she was not reading.

"Well, my dear, now I've got a question to ask you. How do you think you shall like me?"

"I *think* I shall like you very well," Eva said, taking Mrs. Tarring at her word, and giving her a direct reply.

"You think you will? Well, I'm very glad to hear you say so, because it's not everybody that does like me. There's Miss Varnish, at Deverington Hall, she doesn't like me in the least; she knows I've found her out."

"A friend of yours?" Eva asked, feeling that she must say something.

"A friend of mine! No—nasty creature! I hope I know her a little better. She's a nasty, wily, slimy thing. I as good as told her so when she was last here. What do you think she's doing? Why, making love to her master, or whatever you may call him, while his wife is still alive. There, my dear, now what do you think of such conduct as that?"

"Why, I think, Mrs. Tarring, it cannot be too severely condemned. But, on that very account, one should be quite sure before accusing anybody of it."

"Well, my dear; you're right to say so. I consider that remark of your's a very wise and proper one. Yes, my dear, I do. You know we are told never to speak evil one of another. But, as for that nasty thing, we'll have her some day, and then you shall see for yourself."

Eva felt no particular interest in the blame which might or might not attach to the aspiring Miss Varnish. Knowing how bitterly and unjustly she herself had been credited with matrimonial intriguing, she was, perhaps, rather inclined to disbelieve such accusations, and to support those against whom they might be levelled. But the name of Deverington Hall had a very great interest indeed for Eva. Before parting with her Minchley friends on the previous day she had been entrusted with a full knowledge of all the facts in Mr. Ballow's own possession, and likewise of all the suppositions which had been built upon them. And she had been recommended, in case the chance was offered her, to accept, by all means, the acquaintance of Deverington Hall and its inmates. That such an opportunity would be offered her at all Mrs. Campion's morbid state rendered somewhat improbable.



A LIFE'S MYSTERY

BY CLINTON HOPE

CHAPTER XVII.

MAUDE.

It was about eight o'clock when Emma knocked at the door of Liliass's room that morning. They were to depart by an express train, that left the little village station about two and a half hours hence; they had, therefore, ample time to prepare for their journey. The multifarious luggage of mistress and maid had been packed the day previously, and duly taken into the hall; so there was nothing now for either to do, but partake of breakfast and bid adieu, or not, as pleased them, to the house and its surroundings.

Liliass, after the completion of her toilette, would have made her way into the shrubberies, regardless of having tasted nothing from an early hour the preceding day, had it not been for the interference of her maid, who begged her to delay going out until she had finished her meal.

An exhilarating breeze was astir, the sky was a mixture of azure and white, without one speck of envious black or grey; the air was redolent with the perfumes of newly-planted flowers, and the parterres gay with the brightest of colours. The birds were singing their liveliest airs, and, on the whole, never had the old mansion and its environs appeared to greater advantage than on this morning, when its young mistress was to desert it for the busy metropolis. The fish-pond, now no longer covered with weeds, but a bright limpid sheet of water, presented a picture of tranquillity and refreshing coolness difficult to leave. In its clear depths Liliass long gazed, watching, with a dreamy pleasure, the circles made upon the surface by the movements of its ~~swims~~ ^{swims}

dwellers. Next she bent her steps to the avenue of sycamores, and beheld with delight, not unmingled with melancholy, that she must so soon leave it, the luxurious greenness and shade of the spreading foliage. And lastly she viewed the receding tide, rolling majestically away from the pebbly shore. From this interesting sight she turned quickly aside, too much subdued to make a longer survey of what had, by constant association, become so dear—save for her composure.

Returning over the smooth lawn to the principal entrance of the hall, her eye caught, through the vista of trees in its rear, a glimpse of the sweet expanse of pasturage, through which, on this bright spring day, the gentle rills glided right merrily, dashing with a pretty impetuosity against every opposing substance.

How many crowding, thrilling memories gathered around Lillas, as these scenes, in their varied aspect of the sea and avenue, park and meadow, rose before her! Unused, as some might think her, to the melting mood, she now hid herself beneath the protecting shelter of an ash-tree, and, with her face buried in her hands, shed many a tear; not bitter and passionate drops, such as in a paroxysm of grief or indignation might have been wrung from her, but placid, quiet tears of regret, that trickled gently between her slender fingers, and watered the grass at her feet. No tearing sobs agitated her bosom, only now and then a soft sigh loaded the air for a second, and was then lost in the hum of insects, or the chirping of a stray sparrow.

She had been employed in this very unprofitable manner for nearly an hour, filled with sorrow and nameless fears, when she was recalled to the business of the day by the sudden appearance of the footman, who, after spending a considerable time in looking for her, was at last guided to her retreat by a portion of her dress, that showed itself through the hanging branches of the ash. He came to inform her the carriage was waiting, and that she had but a quarter of an hour to reach the station before the departure of the train by which she proposed going.

Lillas rose hastily at this news, and, with one lingering glance around, proceeded quickly towards the house. In her haste to wander over the beloved grounds she had gone out bonnetless, and had now to wait for her maid to arrange upon her head that important article of feminine adornment. That this piece of business took no little from the fifteen spare minutes is not surprising, nor would anybody, who could have seen with what a bewitching grace the border of pink May harmonised with the rippling ringlets that clustered round the fair brow and roseate cheeks, have conceived the time ill bestowed. Then there was the mantle to adjust, and the gloves to draw on, before Miss Bellamy was pronounced ready.

At length, when each portion of attire had received its critical and final survey, Liliás stepped into the carriage, Emma taking her seat in the rumble.

The horses galloped swiftly, and almost instantly the gabled hall, deer park, sweeping tide, and winding walks, vanished from the travellers' view. There was, indeed, no space for delay, for, as the bowing footman closed the door of the railway-carriage upon his mistress, the warning bell sounded, and even its harsh clang had not died away before the engine, with a shrill scream—calculated to have driven our steamless forefathers distracted—rushed northward, leaving the by-standers, whether sorrowful or indifferent, to betake themselves home at their leisure.

At the London terminus Miss Bellamy descried her aunt's heraldic bearings upon an elegant brougham, waiting at her disposal; and, leaving her maid to make clear to the coachman that she was the lady for whose accommodation his mistress had sent the carriage, she took her seat in it. Her drive was somewhat long, for Mrs. Ashton's residence, as before mentioned, was in Park Lane, and when arrived there, it was but with a languid curiosity that Liliás passed her vision over the extremely tasteful, though rather limited, grounds, in the rear of the handsome modern building. The door, was answered by a man-servant in rich livery, who ushered Liliás into Mrs. Ashton's morning-room, an apartment furnished with the most sumptuous display of elegance, combining, however, with the grandeur of its adornments, the purest taste. Choice paintings were hung upon the walls, all of great value, many the *chefs-d'œuvre* of the best English artists. Faultless statuary occupied the corners of the room; and lounges and chairs of every description and colour were so placed that their shades blended in the most delightful manner, wooing to repose by the soft pile of their cushions. In short, all in the room bespoke the refinement and wealthiness of its owner.

There were two occupants of this apartment, who both rose at Liliás's entrance, and advanced towards her with affectionate courtesy; the difference in their welcomes—expressed by the one only in looks—being that of sincerity and insincerity.

"My dear niece," said Mrs. Ashton,—for she it was who had greeted Liliás,—“I must now introduce to your notice your cousin Maude,” leading forward her companion as she spoke; “and I hope you will find her as worthy of regard as I am convinced she will find you. Maude is a good girl,” she added, with a smile, that intending to be very tender, savoured, in truth, more of condescension than fondness. “But I am sorry that you cannot see your cousin Frank; poor boy!”—with a gentle sigh and an interesting

look of resignation : " he wanted to join the Lancers last year, and nothing I could urge would induce him to relinquish his determination ; he is a dear fellow, a little wilful, to be sure, but so spirited, and so very affectionate ! " And thus she rattled on, for a while praising her absent son ; then she inquired about her dear brother, and from this theme proceeded to question Liliás concerning her journey, asking her if she were not " tired to death. "

" No, dear aunt, not in the least fatigued ; though I should like to change this heavy dress for something more appropriate to the warmth of the weather. "

" Well, love, " returned Mrs. Ashton, graciously, " if you will promise not to absent yourself for more than half-an-hour, I will release you ; luncheon will then be ready, and we can show everything after you have refreshed yourself a little. Go, now, Liliás ; Maude will conduct you to your room ; and mind, " she continued, with a playful uplifting of her finger, " that you do not let your cousin monopolise you entirely ; she is so much in love with you already, that she would, if you were to allow it, keep you upstairs with her all day. "

With a gay smile, Liliás retired with Maude from her aunt's presence, promising to be dead to all the fascinations of a *tête-à-tête* till after lunch ; and, guided by her cousin, she made her way up a flight of broad stairs, that terminated in a spacious landing, upon which the principal chambers opened. It was at the farthest of these doors that Maude Ashton paused, and pushing it back, Liliás found herself in a moderately sized, but exquisitely fitted-up bed-room.

" This, dear cousin, " said Maude, when they were fairly within the chamber, and kissing the cheek nearest to her, " is the room I have chosen for you. I thought, as it looked out upon the garden, you would prefer it—do you ? Of course, not knowing your tastes, I could only be guided by my own in the selection of what I fancied would please you. "

" Thank you, sweet Maude, I could not wish for a prettier bower ; it is such as might suit a heroine of romance, and is even worthy of yourself, my beautiful cousin. "

" Do not call me beautiful, Liliás, " rejoined Maude, gaily, " or you will make me vain, and that is a sin which would meet with its punishment of neglect beside one so handsome as yourself. "

"Not so," answered Maude, with a look of uncompromising earnestness, "you are superbly handsome, and I at best am merely pretty."

But while this friendly little discussion was being carried on, it would have been well to give the reader a view, both of Maude's person and character; the opportunity is not past, however; and while the cousins are engaged in animated converse, oblivious of all besides themselves, I will make an attempt to picture Maude Ashton to you, as she then appeared.

Her figure was less fully moulded than her cousin's; though she was older by nearly two years; her face strongly resembled her mother's, alike in form and feature. There were the same small ruby lips, straight nose, with its arched nostrils, and similar delicate blending of rose with the clear pearly tint of her complexion; beyond this, all resemblance ceased. Her eyes not only differed in colour from those of her parent's, but likewise in expression; the beaming complacency which shone in Mrs. Ashton's dark orbs was, in the clear deep blue of her daughter's, exchanged for a grave earnestness and candour, most winning to the beholder: her silvery low-toned voice was never heard, like her mother's, in hollow compliments, or polite falsehoods, but was chiefly raised in words of gentle assurance to the oppressed, sweet sympathy with the happy, and condolence with afflicted.

Her flaxen hair, deepening into a pale brown, from which—whether the sunlight played around her head, or the gloomy shade of night fell upon it—the brilliant halo never departed, encircling her innocent countenance with its glory, reminded one of some angelised spirit, or, at least, of the most magnificent paintings of the Holy Mother. She was wholly devoid of the superficiality of Mrs. Ashton, and of the fiery impetuosity that—from her mother's account—distinguished her brother; nor could she lay claim to the many brilliant and striking qualities possessed by her cousin. She was neither celebrated for wit, coquetry, nor aristocratic indifference; and would be termed only, by a common observer, a gentle, unobtrusive girl; but she was more than this, for beneath the amiability of her exterior nature lay a nobility of soul, strength of purpose, and power of endurance, which she herself was unconscious of; and, unless these latent qualities were called into action by some unforeseen circumstances, it seemed probable they would fade away with her harmless life, unexercised and unknown.

As yet no severe trouble had passed over her young existence—for such the death of her father could not properly be called. He was a proud, harsh man, who seldom demonstrated any affection for his family—if, indeed, so holy a sentiment as that of love could

exist in the heart devoted solely to the cares of ambition; and though for him Maude shed some natural tears of regret, his loss left not that indelible impression, which the death of a very dear friend will leave even upon the hearts of the young.

Maude's temper, without being lively—which tempers are generally fluctuating—was uniformly cheerful, and of that elastic, hopeful nature that rises superior to every difficulty, and even delights in its triumphs over disappointment. Her mind was imbued with a calm faith and active piety, that tinged her life perhaps with something of greater solemnity than is common in a lovely girl under twenty years of age: a little romance, too, was infused into her soul by a natural love of seclusion, which aided in imparting to her aspect that look of touching thoughtfulness so fascinating in her.

Her powers of acquisition could not be said to be brilliant, but they were good; for music she had almost a passion, and played and sang with a feeling and sweetness as welcome as unusual in these days of dashing, off-hand execution, to which style of performance the term "music" is a misnomer.

One thing more respecting Maude Ashton, and then I must leave to her the task of further proclaiming her character. This piece of news I give because she would not willingly disclose it herself—she was engaged! aye, fair Maude's heart was lost and won, and had been so for more than a year. The much-envied gentleman upon whom her choice had fallen was an old acquaintance; yet, till her departure from Spain, she knew not how much she prized him, nor he her; it was the sudden parting that tore the thin veil of friendship from their eyes, and made them know that they loved. Her suitor was in every way eligible, and an Englishman; Mrs. Ashton had therefore nothing to say against their being affianced. Maude's betrothed had enjoyed the privilege of accompanying his love in her travels over *la belle France*, and would have claimed her hand immediately he landed in England, but that he was summoned back to Spain by the illness of a bachelor uncle, whose estates it was expected ultimately would become his. He was then forced to leave, whispering in the ear of his bride elect, as he bade her good-bye, a promise to come back before the autumn; and, in return, she gave him her word to wed him then.

With only this slight cloud over their loves, well might Leoline Gower and Maude Ashton be hopeful. She heard from him

was more in harmony with her dreamy, imaginative nature than emotions of greater tumult, and besides, were less likely to be dashed by disappointment; for when every pleasure forsakes us, we have still the enjoyment that fancy weaves.

It was not long before Lilius was acquainted with the circumstances of her cousin's engagement; Mrs. Ashton communicated it to her, at the same time expressing a hope that her dear Frank might settle well; accompanying the announcement of this desire with a furtive glance at her auditor, who understood her aunt's meaning to be, that *she* might not be unworthy of her darling.

"He should certainly be a paragon of perfection," thought Lilius, "since his mother evidently prefers him so much to that charming little daughter of her's—I am really curious to see him;" but Lilius's curiosity was destined by unkind fate to remain ungratified, and never did she behold that personification of elegance and nobility, Frank Ashton.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ADVERTISEMENT.

To have proceeded more methodically, I should have stated that Lilius did not escape, upon the day of her arrival, a playful scolding from Mrs. Ashton, for having waited so long before calling her maid to dress her; nor Maude a more serious reprimand for engaging her cousin's attention upstairs, when so many interesting sights remained below unviewed.

Lilius found her aunt exactly the person Sir Shenton had described her to be; frivolous, yet not silly; always delighting in company and excitement, and labouring under childish depression at the least disappointment; while she was insensible to all calls upon her sympathy from the really unhappy. As it chanced, she took a wonderful liking to her niece; and, as her daughter was already engaged, showed no signs of objection to the universal homage paid her.

Miss Bellamy became in good truth the belle of every ball or assembly where she figured; all minor beauties faded into insignificance before the superlative blaze of her attractions; her's was, in common parlance, a great triumph—she won the admiration of every man, and the envy of half the women she approached. Never, surely, did the entrance of any girl into fashionable life create such a sensation; the world—that is the aristocratic portion of it—went positively mad about her. Her portrait adorned many drawing-room albums, and the solicitations for her autograph were as endless as if she had been a Madame de Stael. Talk of literary celebrity, it

is generally nothing compared with what this young creature gained, simply through the graces of her person and the never-wearying charm of her manner. Everybody said so much adulation was enough to turn her brain, yet, through it all, she found time frequently to visit Sarah King, and never neglected to answer her father's letters. He, still engaged in the business which had taken him to the north, read daily accounts of her actions; how she dressed and looked, and whose *soirées* she honoured with her presence; but this gave him no pleasure; he rather sighed at her acknowledged power, partaking vaguely of the fears expressed by her less interested friends.

Could Owen Arnold have witnessed half the absurdities committed for the sake of obtaining a glance of recognition from her lustrous eyes, or perchance for the reward of her hand in a dance, he would, indeed, have despaired of winning her heart entirely to himself. Luckily for his peace of mind he did not behold them, neither, in his obscurity from this shining star, did any reports thereof reach his ears.

Even Mrs. Ashton, who had gloried at first in her niece's conquests, began to feel alarmed, lest in the tumult of excitement occasioned by this prime favourite of fashion, her own claims to admiration should be utterly overlooked, and she be sunk into the unenviable position of a mere chaperone. She would fain have persuaded Lillas to terminate her yet undiminished reign, by marrying one of the many noble suitors who always hovered about her; and though no doubt the advice was very good, Lillas failed to pursue the path pointed out for her. Mrs. Ashton thought she was eager for praise, and reminded her that she could scarcely hope to retain unchecked sway for above another season, as, although none so lovely might appear, the crowd of worshippers who followed her footsteps so unremittingly were withal so fickle that they would, upon the advent of a new beauty, forsake her to pay their homage to her rival, let her possess ever so few advantages beyond that of novelty.

"No, my dear aunt," was Lillas's invariable reply, "I do not intend to marry yet. My lovers, as they call themselves, are for the most part worthless flatterers, and I would even take time to decide."

But if she could thus readily put off these continual persuasions, and mock at the idea that her fascinations could fail to keep up the fervid adulation they had excited, an incident occurred, to disturb her self-complacency, and incline her to the suggestions of her aunt. It was at a ball that, somewhat wearied with the task of replying to the numberless speeches addressed to her, she made her escape into the garden, where she overheard a conversation between

two ladies, of so personal a nature that she ~~deserves~~ no sin to remain within hearing.

The elder lady, a dowager of stout form and supercilious expression, was the widow of Sir Charles Drury, Knight, and the younger, her daughter Caroline, had been school-fellow to Liliás. Miss Drury's hair was of an undeniable red, her eyes a mixed colour, which in different lights might be taken for green or yellow, and her mouth expressed at once obstinacy and peevishness; nevertheless, she fully believed herself a beauty.

"Mamma"—it was the daughter who spoke, in, by the way, the most approved lisp—"who do you think is here?"

The majestic mamma disavowed her capability of guessing, and Miss Drury proceeded:

"Why, Liliás Bellamy—she ran away from Miss Magendie's, and there were bills posted all over London, describing her. Did you ever hear anything so shocking? and yet look at her!"

In saying this, she directed her parent's attention, not to Liliás in the flesh, but as she appeared to her mind's vision.

"Look at her!" repeated the lisping piece of inanity, roused to something like feeling; "how she is courted and praised, just as if she had never disgraced herself! for everybody must believe she eloped—I only wish I could find out whom with."

"But you must not suppose, my love, that her admirers mean anything serious—there is not one of them would marry her."

"Is there not?" thought Liliás, in silent indignation; "it would be almost worth the sacrifice of liberty to prove your mistake."

"To be sure not, 'ma; still it pleases her to see every one else neglected for her sake. There was the dancing-master used to speak to her as though she were a duchess at the least, quite differently from what he did to others—and, indeed, it was so with nearly all the teachers. It was nothing from morning till night but, 'How gracefully she moved!' 'With what expression she read, or sang!' 'How quick she was to learn!' Everything she said or did was sure to be better than any one else's sayings and doings. Of all people on earth," concluded she, with a spitefulness that had been growing keener with each succeeding word, "I do hate Liliás Bellamy most."

"And not without cause, I am convinced, my darling; but do not be so unguarded as to let it be publicly known; it might be thought you were envious."

"Envious! Good gracious! what an absurd idea!" and the red ringlets were thrown back with an injured shake.

"Very—perfectly preposterous! but it is a wicked, uncharitable world, my precious pet," replied Lady Drury, with a martyred expression; "people are so ready to judge ill of one another."

"Very likely," answered the promising Caroline, impatient of such moralising; then, after a moment's interval, she broke out with—"Ma, dear; was not Liliás's mother a public singer, or dancer, or something of that sort?"

"Caroline!"—so loud that it made even Liliás start—"it is perfectly disgraceful of you to ask such a question! Have we no Peerage in the house, that you must betray this lamentable ignorance? I forget what author it is who calls the Peerage the 'British Bible;' vastly funny he thought himself, no doubt; but such men, and all who aim at bringing ridicule upon that most glorious part of the English constitution—its aristocracy—ought to be decapitated."

Lady Drury loved hard words, and, having recovered breath, resumed. "No, Caroline; Lady Bellamy was the daughter of one of the noblest families of Naples, Count Revoli."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed the unabashed young lady. "Well, I knew she was an Italian; and I thought Italians were all singers or ballet-dancers. Liliás does not look quite English, and I detest foreigners," cried this charming specimen of native growth.

"Detest them as profoundly as you please, my dear; so long as you do not express your sentiments openly. I fear the Misses Magendie have not performed their parts fully. There is nothing so essential to a young lady coming out as a knowledge of what she may speak against and what she may not, and this they should have taught you. Now, as a rule, avoid religion, though, when it is broached, it is fitting you should prove yourself orthodox by decrying the Dissenters, and Catholicism is especially safe to abuse. I hardly think you can do that too much."

"No; the Misses Magendie were always setting before us the wickedness perpetrated in convents, where they kill and eat one another, you know. And now we are talking about Catholics, it reminds me that Liliás's mother must have been one—that accounts for everything, doesn't it?—her eloping, I mean."

"Assuredly. The popish errors are the cause of everything bad that transpires, unless I except the spirit of democracy—Liberalism, as it is called—which has perverted so many lately, including some of our young nobles. 'The spread of education,' 'The march of intellect,' 'Elevation of the masses,' and that kind of thing, wants putting down;" and looking as if she felt herself unequal to the gigantic work, Lady Drury unfurled her fan, and fanned herself with slow dignity away. How busy that night were the mother and daughter in circulating reports of Miss Bellamy's aunt's flight from school the preceding summer! and how eagerly the reply was caught up, particularly by baffled mamas and faded escapees! How husbands, told of it by their wives, looked grave,

bidding Oswald or Arthur take care not to entangle themselves, and how, when the insidious whisper reached the ears of aged bachelors and young men, the former laughed, and the latter muttered curses upon the fair seeming of her whose fame was thus being bemired ! Liliás could not, upon this and many subsequent occasions, do other than observe the sneers that marked the countenances of the malevolent, the reserve that chilled the accents of the many, and the impetuous zeal of the few who set themselves resolutely against conviction ; but if there was any change effected in her it was that she became more gay, more obviously careless of opinion. Still the viper of suspicion stung her, and long before the season was over she would turn for relief to the rest and seclusion she promised herself when they should leave London for a watering-place. Brighton was the one selected by Mrs. Ashton, though her niece and daughter would fain, after the fatigues they had gone through, have taken refuge in a less fashionable spot ; but this was not to be thought of, Mrs. Ashton declared ; so they had, after all, to make up their minds for a continuation, in a lesser degree, of the same harassing, profitless life they had been leading. Sir Shenton, now relieved from the cares of his business, was to meet them at Brighton. The coming day was the one fixed upon for the journey, and having no engagement of any description, Liliás was lounging in her aunt's boudoir on this warm July evening, with the *Times* newspaper in her hand.

Mrs. Ashton, whose patronage extended only to the *Court Journal* and *The Times*, had just finished perusing an article in the latter, and had thrown it aside upon being called away for further directions concerning the morrow. Maude, too, was busy in tending her favourite flowers, and Liliás was left to her own resources for amusement. She turned the paper carelessly over, skimming here and there through a bit of anecdote, scandal, or report ; tired of this, she was led, from sheer lack of occupation, to look at the advertisements, and, disgusted with their sameness, soon laid the paper upon the couch on which she sat ; when, in so doing, something in large characters caught her eye. Again she took it up ; this time with an absorbing interest ; her heart beat fast, and her cheeks flushed and paled painfully as she read.

Having perused it many times, as if fearful of misunderstanding the import of what she saw, with a voice harsh and dry with strong feeling, she murmured aloud, " This is an opportunity of freeing myself from my yoke that may not occur again ; I ought to make application ; or, no—King shall do it for me. I intended to see her this evening and stay till to-morrow ; but I cannot trust myself to do so now, and must write instead. Should I succeed, it will prevent the slightest clue to the discovery of my secret."

Saying this, she hurried from the room ; wrote a hasty letter, which she enclosed in an envelope addressed to Mrs. King, Rose Cottage, Blackheath, and with the letter returned to the boudoir.

The newspaper still rested upon the couch. Liliás quickly seized upon it, and, turning to the place where the pregnant notice was inserted, re-read it with a smile that was more bitter than glad. Suddenly a feeling of compunction for what she was about to do, appeared to strike her ; for the colour forsook her face, and she staggered towards a seat for support.

"I don't think I can do it," she said, hoarsely, then added with a greater effort of calmness, as though some powerful argument against her emotion was presented by her reason ; "but I am not safe now. Let only this memento of the past be removed, and I shall hereafter be perfectly secure. Away with this weak sentimentality ! I cannot afford to spend my energies in vain regret. When so much is at stake I must not be fastidious. My feelings have received harsh usage before, and this shock they can surely sustain."

She had rung the bell previous to this soliloquy, and now a servant awaited her commands.

"Send my maid to me," she ordered. The man bowed and departed, and in less time than Liliás could compose her disturbed features, and assume an attitude of indifference, Emma Adams's stealthy step glided into the apartment, and her ever-observant eyes were fixed with deep, disguised scrutiny upon her mistress's countenance.

Miss Bellamy held the note out to the girl. "Emma," she said, "I wish this to go immediately ; when does the post close ?"

"Not till ten o'clock, Miss," the maid replied ; "and I believe there are two mails depart before that hour."

"Well, be sure that you do not neglect to see to it to-night. You can take the rest of the evening ; I shall not want you again."

The girl returned her thanks as Miss Bellamy retired, and remained mechanically twisting about the letter between her fingers, with a more than usually thoughtful cast upon her reflective features.

"This letter is an important one, I am convinced," mentally argued the unscrupulous maid ; "and if I am to learn the hidden details of her life, I must not be too particular as to the means. I will see what she says. For this purpose she left the room, making her way to her own chamber, where, with the application of steam to the envelope, she readily succeeded in opening it.

The creamy tinted paper she drew from its covering was blank on nearly three sides ; on the first and a portion of the second were traced delicate angular characters ; these the maid criticised

most carefully. It was not much she got to reward her labours. Lilia wrote thus :—

MY DEAR NURSE.—About the middle of the second column of advertisements in *The Times* of to-day, July 20th, you will see one which I desire you to answer without delay. For obvious reasons I refrain from copying it ; you will certainly understand the one I refer to. If the reply you receive is satisfactory to you, pray come to a speedy arrangement, and do not consult me unless it be imperative. I would fain act less precipitantly and harshly, but the choice is not left me. It would destroy my firmness were I to see you ; so even this melancholy satisfaction I am forced to forego, and here bid you good-bye. Communicate to me the result of your application as early as possible, addressing to my initials, Post Office, Brighton. Too much caution cannot be observed in our correspondence.

Yours ever affectionately,
L. B.

“ I will find out what this advertisement is,” said Emma, re-fastening the letter ; “ the room is probably empty, and if it should not be, I can easily make an excuse for my intrusion.”

But there was no occasion for excuse, the apartment was vacant, and precisely in the same order as when she had left it a few minutes back. With an eagerness uncommon in her generally placid manner, Emma snatched up the paper, turning with haste to the spot upon which her mistress's eyes had rested so intently just before.

“ The middle of the second column,” she repeated to herself. “ I can see nothing here. ‘ Wanted a Governess,’ that cannot be it ; ‘ A Situation wanted by a Qualified Young Person, as Lady's Maid’—nor that either,” commented the girl ; “ she dare not dismiss me. ‘ A Lady is desirous——’ Ah, this is the one,” Emma exclaimed joyfully, “ my plan of patient watchfulness succeeds beyond my expectations. My knowledge must yield a golden harvest ; and yet if I do not fathom the entire of the business, this discovery will be of little use to me. I will ask permission for a week's holiday, and in that time I shall surely succeed in sifting the mystery to the bottom. She will hardly refuse me ; and should she demur, I have simply to remind her of the power I possess to make her grant with willingness a request

relative, was somewhat surprised at the request, and made no effort to conceal her feelings upon the subject.

"When did you hear of this?" she inquired, "and why did you not tell me of it before? It will be very inconvenient for me to pare you now. However, you may go."

"I only heard of it this evening," answered the girl, with tears in her eyes. "I was just going out, as you told me I might, when the letter was put into my hands; here it is," she continued, presenting a folded note to Miss Bellamy.

"Oh, I don't want to read it. I believe your statement implicitly," returned Liliás, with compassionate thoughtfulness. She would not perhaps have done so had she witnessed the expression of cunning triumph that irradiated for a moment the quiet features of her attendant.

"And Miss——" Here the girl hesitated, and, despite her ordinary confidence, coloured deeply.

"You are in want of money, I suppose, to take to your mother," said Liliás, with a dash of irony in her tone. "There is, I believe, no question in the world unconnected with gold; but I really do not know how I can supply your necessities, for, putting the whole I have together, it amounts only to a few pounds. I was about applying to my father to-day, which I am quite ashamed of, since I have done it so repeatedly of late. How little can you do with?"

"I want twenty pounds," Emma replied calmly, for she had now quite recovered herself. "My mother is in great distress concerning the payment of debts she has been forced to incur."

"I will give you all I have," Liliás said, "and promise to make up the sum as soon as I can; but for the present you must wait."

A change came over Emma's countenance as Liliás thus spoke—a change expressive of quiet determination.

"The debts must be paid immediately," exclaimed she, unhesitatingly, "or a surety given; and who will be bound for their payment?"

"I cannot possibly," Liliás said, somewhat sternly. "It would not do for me to appear in this matter; as I have before told you, I will give you all I have by me—more than this I cannot do. I am distressed for you," she continued, in a softened voice; "but farther than I have mentioned, I am powerless to help you out of your difficulty."

"I must have the money," was the answer, delivered in tones of steadfast resolution, while the speaker fixed her basilisk eyes upon Liliás's face; "and if you cannot obtain it for me, I must ask Sir Shenton. To ensure my faithfulness to your secret, he will not refuse even a larger sum."

Lilias paled visibly at this threat; but, striving to master her emotion, replied, with well-acted carelessness:

"I acknowledge your power over me, and rather than you should be reduced to the alternative you name, I will obtain for you the required amount—how, I cannot at present decide. I must think of it; but, depend upon it, you shall have the money to-morrow."

"May God reward you for your feeling heart!" her maid exclaimed. "Were it not absolutely necessary, I would not press you so; but, as I have said, I must have twenty pounds to take with me in the morning to Sussex."

"Aye, you shall," murmured her mistress, faintly; "leave me now."

Emma obeyed with seeming reluctance, casting many a look behind at Lilias, who, with a face clouded by thought, was gazing vacantly at the richly-flowered carpet. When the maid had left, and the last faint echo of her footsteps were lost, Miss Bellamy paced the room in a tumult of rage and grief.

"Good heavens!" she soliloquised, when at length she had walked herself into a more temperate frame of mind, "is this creature—this menial, to lord it over me thus? Does she presume to threaten me? And am I reduced so low that I dare not resent it? I thought, when I disclosed to her a portion of my terrible secret, that she would respect my misery, and probably be of service, whereas, instead of doing me a good office, she makes me her tool. It may not even be true concerning her mother's liabilities—but that is no concern of mine; she is resolved to have the money she demands, and it must be my care to get it for her. I must borrow from my aunt—I can, I suppose, do that, and trust to the liberality of papa to return the loan. It is not this I so much mind—it is to be in the power of the girl which is so insupportable; and to know, too, that I can never hope to rid myself of her, that she will cling to me, like an incubus, for life.—But enough of this," added she, with strange bitterness; "I am childish to think so much of the paltry degradation, since no one knows of it except myself, whereas at any moment some accident, of which I cannot dream, may disclose that which would draw down upon me the execrations of all mankind, who, in their judgment, never regard their own transgressions, nor the circumstances in which the sins of others have been committed."

Carried away by her thoughts, Lilias did not speak again for some time; and when she did, her tone was less sad than before, and in her expressive face hope had usurped the look of passionate grief which had previously been inscribed there.

"The letter is gone, and King will be able to tell me the result

of her application in a few days. Oh! that she may be successful! Then shall I be free—free even to listen to the proposals of my suitors—the poor, blind simpletons! If they knew the hundredth part of the scorn in which I hold their shallow falsities, with what scared faces would they fly from me? And could they only think to whom it is they pay their court, and for whose ear their flattering speeches are prepared, they would recoil with horror, lest in my very touch they meet contamination. But I am an idiot to think of this: nothing can rake up the ashes of the past; the hand of Time must have removed the faintest footmarks to detection. Why, then, do I dream incessantly of discovery, and cry aloud with fear when darkness is around me, dreading to see a spectre in every passing shadow? My nerves are unhinged by my own cowardice, and could I overcome this corroding and morbid anxiety, there would henceforth be nothing to disturb my peace beyond the insignificant trials of every-day life."

CHAPTER XIX.

AUSPICIOUS PROSPECTS.

THERE was a great deal of bustle next morning, a continual lashing of cords, carrying of boxes, and running up and down stairs; but through it all Lillas slept soundly—more soundly than was usual with her.

"How disagreeable it is to get up!" she said, as she unclosed her eyes at the call of her maid's voice. "I should like to sleep always. Is the morning fine?" she asked; "let the light in more."

"It is a very dull morning, Miss," answered Emma, drawing the curtain a little aside; "and has been raining heavily."

"I know!" rejoined her mistress hastily, continuing, with a tinge of embarrassment; "I heard it pattering against the window."

The whole time the toilette operations were going on, not a word was uttered; and as the girl from time to time gave a sidelong glance at her mistress's heavy eyelids, and the dark lines beneath the lower lashes, she could easily believe that her morning slumber was all she had enjoyed.

"Why, miss," she exclaimed suddenly, on going to the wardrobe, "the dress you wore last evening has been taken away!"

"Never mind," was the impatient interruption; "it is perfectly safe, you may be sure," and with a sigh of weariness Lillas resumed her reflections.

"But I hung it up myself, the very last thing. What can have become of it?" pursued the girl, with a bewildered look.

The somewhat sharp command from her mistress to finish dress-

sing her, cut short these expressions of wonderment, and soon Miss Bellamy went downstairs.

"Well," cried Emma, unable to contain her surprise a moment after she was alone, "this is a strange thing! I can't surely be mistaken, and have put it under anything else." At the idea that she should find it on another peg, she began taking down the many dresses in the wardrobe, without, however, finding the missing one; and impelled by a curiosity more keen, perhaps, than the occasion merited, she proceeded to inspect a closet opening out of the bed-room, where, cast upon a heap of dusty boxes, lay the article she was in search of—not in the condition she had last seen it, but crumpled, damp, and dirty. In an instant it flashed through her mind how sleepy Miss Bellamy was when aroused, and in what a peculiar manner she had made the acknowledgment respecting the fall of rain during the night. Had she been out in it? Yes, incredible as it looked, it was a fact; for close by the spoiled dress, and bearing plainer tokens of the drenching they had received, was a bonnet and mantle, while in the corner was thrown a pair of boots disgracefully muddy. None of the things could have been in this state without being long exposed to the wet; though where could Miss Bellamy have been to? What could have taken her from her bed in time and weather so unseasonable?

That she, who was too cold, or scornful, to show the least partiality for any of her admirers; whose proud delicacy fled appalled at the hint of a love not manifest to the world; that she should be connected with an intrigue was beyond comprehension; and yet, was it likely, was it possible, that a young lady should run such a risk merely for the risk's sake?

Associated with her leaving London, it appeared that she had gone out to bid some one farewell; but who could it be? If in reality she was capable of making a midnight assignation, Emma would henceforth regard virtue as a huge imposition; and what else was left her to suppose? Does not mystery nearly always signify guilt?

Lilias, unknowing what fertile speculations were being engaged in by Emma about her, yet wore a very pre-occupied expression as she entered the breakfast-parlour, and returned the cheerful salutation of her aunt and cousin.

"You look as though you had not been to sleep all night," appended the former, as she marked the inanimate drooping of Lilias's eyelids.

A blush overspread her niece's cheek, giving a momentary brightness to her heavy eyes, and, with a forced laugh, she said:

"I have not had much, I confess; I was so interested in a book I began yesterday that I could not help sitting up to finish it."

Maude's inquiry, how she liked the conclusion, prevented the

necessity of answering her aunt's warning as to the injurious effect of night reading, and she returned randomly :

"It is much like the ending of other books."

Her cousin looked surprised.

"I thought how different it was," she said; but, as Liliias showed a disinclination to carry on the topic, she let it drop.

"Miss Bellamy did not like asking her aunt for money now, but considering she might not have another opportunity in the hurry consequent upon departure, she constrained herself to make the request at once.

"How much did you say you wanted?" asked Mrs. Ashton, drawing out her purse.

"Twenty pounds, if you can oblige me with the loan. I have been so very extravagant the last month or so that I am in arrears with my milliner."

"You must not be offended, Liliias, if I say I think your papa does not sufficiently consider the wants of a young lady in your station of life. I must speak to him for an increase of your allowance."

"It is quite unnecessary," replied her niece, with an air of contrition; "he will let me have anything I ask for; but really I never used to spend a third of what he gave me, and was continually refusing money when he offered it; so he does not calculate upon my expenses being increased thus wonderfully. I must explain it to him when I see him; meanwhile I do not like to depart in debt."

"Certainly not," put in Maude, with quiet energy. "Dear cousin, I can lend you what you want, and a greater sum if you require it; mamma allows me much more than I can ever spend."

"Yes, Maude is a regular miser, and as economical with everything as though she had only a poor fifty pounds a-year. I often blame her for her carefulness," observed Mrs. Ashton; "and," resumed she, laughing, "I desire that you will accept her offer, to prove the difficulty it is to her to part with her hoard."

Maude coloured, and answered her mother with a reproachful look. "You know, mamma," she said, "why it is that I am so prudent; for niggardly you cannot call me."

"Yes, yes—I know!" was her mother's impatient reply; "if you must be a saint, and will consider it your duty to visit every dirty hovel in which there is a sick person to tend, or an ignorant child to teach, I cannot help it, only I beg you will always change your clothes, and never come near me in the garments that have entered such dens."

The tears rose to Maude's eyes at this unmerited reproof, but she repressed their fall, sweetly remarking to her cousin, by way of apology for the utter selfishness of her parent's speech :

"Mamma is so fearful of contagion, and cannot endure the idea of my visiting people with any disease, particularly fever; but I think there is no danger. Sometimes, it is true, I have taken cold, in going and returning, which is the worst consequence that has yet attended my visits; and I trust Providence will always protect me in doing what is right."

Miss Ashton spoke with a deep but unostentatious reverence, that involuntarily affected the ill-temper of her parent, who, with a smile bestowed equally upon her niece and daughter, and a kiss to the latter, recovered her wonted liveliness of demeanour. Lillias, whose religious feelings were far from deeply rooted, yet gazed with admiring awe upon the face of her cousin, which reflected clearly the genuine piety of her soul.

After the conclusion of the meal, the cousins, arm-in-arm, proceeded to Maude's chamber, where she presented twenty pounds to Lillias, expressing the desire, as she did so, that she would not trouble herself to return the money till she could well afford it.

"That will only be till I have seen papa: but now I must leave you to give my maid instructions for the payment of this troublesome bill."

"No, dear! call her to you; for should I let you leave me you will stay away so long. Here is my maid, Gordon; she will tell her to come.—Gordon," she continued, raising her voice so as to be heard by her own attendant, who was passing the door, "come here a moment."

The girl instantly made her appearance at this command. She was a trim, neat-figured maiden, with a cheerful countenance and open brown eyes, which presented a favourable contrast to Emma Adams's secretive orbs, always lurking distrustfully beneath their dark lashes.

"Request Miss Bellamy's maid to come here," said Maude, addressing Gordon, who with a smiling reply departed to execute her mission.

When Emma appeared, Miss Bellamy, in a careless tone, bade her take the bank-note she gave her to Mademoiselle Duprès, in payment of her account.

"Take a cab," was Lillias's instruction, "and when you have completed your business proceed at once upon your journey. Do y

"What a peculiar notion! Why, Maude, your striving to find out something worthy of speculation in my innocent Emma is a sure sign that you have been reading novels too freely of late. I would strongly recommend the study of graver subjects."

"Don't laugh at me, cousin; I am perhaps foolish, and certainly ungenerous, to speak distrustfully of the girl to you. While I confess she may be as perfectly candid and artless as I believe Gordon to be; I always feel uneasy in her presence. She reminds me of a panther or tiger, sleek and soft to the touch, and pleasing to the eye, but ever on the alert for mischief, when she has obtained the mastery over you through her acute powers of calculation."

"Really you are talking a deal of rubbish, such as, if you heard repeated, you would be ashamed of," Liliás exclaimed, half sarcastically.

Her cousin either did not hear her, or was too much absorbed in the subject of her reflections to heed this remark, and pursued—"It makes one shiver to think of her subtle, observant gaze following one's actions; I could not endure her to be about me. For her to arrange my hair with her long icy fingers, that look like those of a skeleton, would be to me perfectly unbearable. The other day she offered to fasten my bracelet, and, though I feel such an objection to her, I conquered my repugnance, and submitted my wrist to her manipulation. I shall not easily forget the clammy chill of her hand as it came in contact with mine; it made me quite nervous."

"You seem intent upon making me so, with your exaggerated fancies," her cousin said, pettishly, as she languidly twisted a curl around her fingers; and thus the conversation ended.

An hour later they, with Mrs. Ashton and their respective attendants, were on their way to Brighton. The day was gloomy and overcast; but this could not damp the delighted expectations of the trio. Soon they felt the refreshing influence of the sea breeze, which greeted Liliás with an exhilarating resemblance of home. She almost fancied herself near the noble Hall of her forefathers, with its quaint structure and fine prospects. A thousand recollections, both sorrowful and joyous, came to her mind; making her yearn still more after the past—the far past of sunny childhood. Her aunt observed the thoughtfulness of her mood, and gaily suggested as its cause one of the crowd of adorers left to pine over her absence in the vast metropolis they were leaving behind them.

"Pray do not, fair queen," said she, "let this disturb your serenity, for, directly the fact of your arrival at Brighton becomes known, you will have around you your old swarm of idolaters, with a host of new beaux."

Sir Shenton Bellamy had been able, in consequence of a speedier termination of his long-standing business than he had calculated

upon, to arrive at the watering-place before his sister and her suite, and therefore was at the station to welcome them.

The meeting between the father and daughter was fraught with joy for both, as might be anticipated from the long term of their separation. As for the baronet's greeting of Mrs. Ashton, it was greatly different from what that giddy, unfeeling woman deserved, or even expected; being as sincerely affectionate as if the period of their disunion had been marked by the greatest love and consideration on her part. Sir Shenton had been much wounded by his sister's conduct towards himself at first, but the regard she had demonstrated for his beloved child was more than sufficient, in his estimation, to atone for it all. Always perfectly unselfish in anything connected with his daughter, he made his interest and pleasure subservient to her, and was better than satisfied if she were happy.

The baronet had never seen his niece before, and was much struck by the artless grace and unaffected simplicity she revealed, set off as were these attractions by her loveliness of person and soundness of principle. Maude, also, was not slow to perceive the worth of her new-found relative's noble heart and strong sense; and the consequence of their just appreciation of each other was a firm and warm attachment. Lillias was too high-minded to feel jealous of the growing partiality evinced by her father for her amiable cousin; indeed, she was rather gratified than otherwise at Sir Shenton's affection for this guileless child of nature.

"His love for her," thought she, "may prove a consolation to him, if evil should overtake me; and he is so generous, and his affection for me is so boundless, that I am secure against any unfavourable comparison he might draw between her ductile gentleness, and the impetuosity and wilfulness of my nature. She is, I know, better than I—oh! a million times, even if I could cleanse my life of that foul blot. She would die sooner than act the continual lie that I am doing, and bear the most fearful of torments rather than veer from the path of rectitude, were the allurements of the most seductive passions presented before her, hissing temptations into her ears till reason was confounded: still would heavenly precepts guide her footsteps, and the fear of God suffice to keep her steadfast to her duty. But alas! the consolations of religion cannot be mine. The divine promises of forgiveness I dare not hope were intended for me; only the judgments pronounced against the worst of sinners. As I have hitherto lived for this world, so must I continue to do; I tremble to think of another." In this manner did the wretched girl thrust from her all hope of returning peace, thinking, in her remorseful misery as

in her defiant gaiety, that she alone, of all God's erring children, was shut out from mercy.

The fourth day of their instalment at Brighton, as they were out walking, Liliás sauntered, unperceived, away from her party till quite out of sight, and, with quickened step, proceeded to the post-office. There was a letter waiting for her, and so great was her haste to peruse its contents that she broke the seal before gaining the street.

"My dear young lady," began Sarah King's answer to Liliás's enigmatical letter, "I applied as you directed, and have been successful past my expectations. Everything is arranged, and to-morrow is the day fixed upon for the journey. No questions of importance were asked; I gave the name you decided upon. The lady is rich, and seems kind, and you may, I think, dear mistress, set your heart at rest. I will not lose sight of your interests, you may be sure, and will give you all further news I can, by means of a letter, very soon. Your ever-faithful and loving nurse,—Sarah King."

"So far all is well," commented Liliás, when she had finished reading Sarah's note; "but one step more, and I stand in a new sphere, unapproachable by the faintest suspicion."

The rallying of her aunt, and the more gentle badinage of Maude, concerning her absence, did not affect Miss Bellamy. She had, during the last year, become—save upon very rare occasions—as collected and prepared at all times as the most accomplished deceiver could wish for; and at the present, a look of exultation and complete relief from anxiety gave her beautiful face a richer glow, her eye a brighter sparkle, and her step a lighter tread.

"You appear as though walking upon air. I never saw you looking more lovely than this morning," her father said, as she tripped into the room in which he sat, upon her return from her walk. "Has any unusually good news reached you, and given this impetus to your spirits?"

"None, but the glad tidings a walk by the sea-side always brings of future health," was her gay reply, as she kissed her questioner. "I would stay to describe to you some remarkable people we met, but I must now go and dress for dinner. *Au revoir*," she concluded, blithely, closing the door after her.

Maude retreated, half abashed at the warmth she had displayed, and blushed brightly, as she conjoined in a tone of subdued joy:

"The reason of my delight is this," holding out a letter; "it is from Leoline."

"Indeed!" answered Lilius, abstractedly; then resumed with a show of interest; "and what does he say? Nay, I do not require to read his letter. It is a production by no means differing from the usual routine of hypocritical rubbish, I dare say; tell me yourself."

"Not if you say such things of Leoline; he is no hypocrite, and does not write nonsense," said Maude, with a look of indignant surprise.

"Forgive me, sweet coz.; the news! the news!"

"It is this," rejoined her cousin, whose ardour had undergone a severe check from the unsympathetic manner of Lilius: "he expects to be in England by the end of this month, or the beginning of the next; and—and——."

"Bids you prepare to become Mrs. Gower by that period?" finished Lilius, with a sarcastic smile—for Maude had paused hesitatingly in her recital; "so, of course, you are out of your mind at the prospect of such an event, and torture yourself with ideas of your unworthiness for so much felicity."

"He certainly desires me to fulfil my promise of being his wife when he comes," said Maude, whose heightened displeasure at her cousin's tone overpowered the embarrassment she would at another time have felt; "and although I do not, as you seem to imagine, think myself quite unworthy of his affection, I pray that I may become more capable of appreciating his excellencies."

"Come, sweet Maude, don't be offended; I only drew deductions of your sentiments from those ordinarily entertained by tender-hearted young ladies, upon the verge of that destroying gulf, matrimony. Your Leoline is, I have no doubt, everything that is good and great, or he would not have won the heart of my peerless Maude; but, you know, that does not make it incumbent on me to participate in your admiration of him. I am not the chosen of his affections, and may therefore dare to see him as he is, and not as a youthful and vivid imagination, such as yours, would paint him."

Lilius spoke with a mixture of banter and feeling, that greatly puzzled Miss Ashton, who did not reply; contenting herself with retiring, more than ever, into the recesses of her own pure heart.

"Poor Lilius!" she would say to herself, when ruminating upon Miss Bellamy's scepticism, "I should not blame her for her mockery of love. To her, as yet, has not been given the privilege of living

for and in another. I should rather pity her, than feel irritated by her scoffings."

CHAPTER XX.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

EMMA ADAMS's holiday appeared not to have produced her much satisfaction, for upon her return she wore a look of despondent irritability, and was more eager than ever in her watchings of her mistress's conduct. All her curiosity was pursued by adverse fate, and though she contrived not merely to obtain a look at the address of all letters coming to Miss Bellamy, but to gain an insight of their contents, there was a provoking paucity of information in them. There were declarations of love, signed and unsigned, some downright proposals of marriage, others letters of friendship; the chief being notes of invitation, thanks, inquiry, or condolence, according as the writer wanted to express his or her sensibility of a kindness, to ask a trifling favour, or sympathise over the death of a canary.

Lady Drury and Miss Caroline were at Brighton, as busy as before in seeking to undermine Liliass's reputation, but less successful, because of the oldness of the report. It was all very well for mamma to protest that her angelic Clarissa should not form an acquaintance with *that* Miss Bellamy; how could either of them keep to their resolution, when she was included in every assembly, belonged to the best set, and led the fashion?

The stiffest of papas got, in time, to cry "humbug" to the renewal of the worn-out scandal, and those of the young men who did not vow that they disbelieved every syllable of the story, said there might be no harm in it, and if there were, what was the use of making such a fuss? She was so distractingly winning, so irresistible in all her contrary moods, that not to fall in love with her was an impossibility, let her be what she might.

Liliass watched with a sort of triumph the returning recognition of her dominion over her suitors, reading clearly the reasons by which they were swayed, for or against her. Above all, it interested her to see the increasing envy of her old schoolfellow, to compare notes between the manner in which she spoke of and to her. In the former case it was, "That strange, bold, or eccentric Miss Bellamy;" in the latter, "My dearest friend, my darling Liliass." How Miss Drury quivered with suppressed passion, when she discovered that her artfully-told story to a young nobleman, actually sent him

to the feet of the abhorred Liliás, when, save for the generous impulse of proving his contempt for the base attack, he might never have allowed his admiration to proceed to so great an extent! One instance of magnanimity such as this goes far to efface the recollection of numbers derogatory to humanity, and Liliás was so touched that she could have pardoned, at that moment, every one who had spoken to her hurt.

Meanwhile, the imperial beauty was regaining her footing in the outer world; in the little world at home affairs were not altogether in satisfactory train.

Miss Ashton, despite the excuses she endeavoured to make for her cousin's want of sympathy in her bright dream of love, could not bring herself to mention Leoline Gower in her presence. Liliás, led by this reserve to fancy she had estranged Maude's gentle heart, strove to think more charitably of her betrothed, and particularly by the affectionate artifices of caresses and kind attentions, to win back her confidence; for though Liliás was unsparing in her scorn of false sentiment, as of shams of all kinds, she was imbued with a deep respect for genuine feeling.

One morning Mrs. Ashton handed a letter to her daughter, whose heightened colour, and ill-disguised eagerness to withdraw immediately she was put in possession of it, betrayed to Liliás's quick eye the name of the writer; and she resolved to avail herself of this opportunity for making up for her past offence, by following Maude to her chamber, whither she had hurried as soon as she could break away from the breakfast-room.

Do not, however, gentle reader, fall into the error of supposing her so devoid of tact as to then and there disturb her cousin's privacy. She waited till more than sufficient time had elapsed for the perusal of the tender effusion, allowing even for the second and third reading, which lovers usually bestow upon a *billet-doux*. Miss Bellamy's light step had reached the door of her cousin's chamber, which was ajar, when it was hastily closed from the inside, and the voice of Maude, attuned to a plaintive cadence, murmured well-nigh inarticulately, "Not yet, Liliás; I want to be alone for awhile." Tacitly did Liliás obey; seeking her own apartment in wonder and distress, there to ruminate upon the calamity which her forebodings told her was at hand.

strain, and was completely deserted by its wonted bloom; her pale lips quivered with the violent effort she made to suppress her emotion, and her limbs tottered under the weight of her delicate frame.

"My dearest Maude!" cried Lilius, in a compassionating accent, when her surprise and grief at this woeful spectacle had a little subsided, "What has happened?"

But Maude made no answer, save by an agonising uplifting of her burning eyes, and a smile of such utter misery that it was more painful to behold than an open expression of grief.

"Maude, love," repeated her cousin, really terrified at the strange wildness of her aspect, "I implore you to tell me what it is that ails you?"

The poor girl struggled to speak, but the sounds died away in a moan, and she fell fainting into Lilius's supporting arms. With a display of strength she could not in a less emergency have shown, Miss Bellamy carried the unconscious girl across the room, and laying her upon the bed, rung violently for assistance; meanwhile chafing the cold hands of the suffering young creature, who, still and ghastly, was stretched upon the couch, the covering of which did not surpass in whiteness the pallor of her face.

Soon Gordon, breathless with the speed she had made, entered the room, and when she discovered the state of her mistress, was almost incapacitated from assisting Lilius's efforts for her recovery, through excess of affection, for she devotedly loved her young lady.

"Quick, help me to revive her, and then go to warn Mrs. Ashton of her daughter's indisposition," Miss Bellamy commanded; herself with great alacrity freeing her cousin from the burthen of attire that enveloped her.

It was long before Maude regained her sensibility, and when she did so, a flood of tears came to the relief of her surcharged bosom. Following this paroxysm was a long interval of silence which none dare disturb, feeling that this space of quietude would be of great service to her. Her mother, uncle, and cousin, immeasurably distressed to behold this incomprehensible and sudden change, were all anxiety to fathom the cause; but how to do so? Maude had not once spoken, and evinced so great an inclination for solitude, that they at length constrained themselves to leave her, although burthened with the strongest anxiety on her account.

"It must be," reasoned her mother, "Gower's letter, that has thus affected her, and as I could not find it about the chamber, it is probably in the pocket of her dress;" and with the idea of securing it, Mrs. Ashton made her way to Maude's bed-room.

There the white robe lay upon a chair, just as Lilius had placed it; but Mrs. Ashton did not like to prosecute her search till she had assured herself that her movements were unnoticed by the invalid. Her daughter's face was turned aside, and half-buried in the pillow; she either had not heard her mother enter, or wanted to continue her reflections. Having secured the epistle, Mrs. Ashton quietly left the chamber, and proceeded to a small parlour that she designated her boudoir.

The letter was indeed sufficient in its import to produce the dread effects she had witnessed in Maude. The writer, after a profuse expression of regret and numberless prayers for forgiveness, went on to say that the uncle whose death was to put him in possession of a handsome property would make him his heir on condition alone of wedding his natural daughter, whom no one had heard of up to this date. Now, his uncle's property, which Mr. Gower had so confidently trusted to succeed to, was his principal dependence for the future, as his parents had left him slenderly provided for; and the unexpected appearance of a cousin, who, for all her illegitimacy, might be made to inherit her father's whole fortune, was a great shock to him.

"Rather than make myself a beggar," wrote Leoline Gower, "which would as effectually remove all hopes of marrying you, as would my union with my cousin, I have consented to my harsh fate. In a week I shall become the husband of Leonora, who, I need not tell you, can compare in nothing to my Maude—alas! mine no longer! She is young, and said to be pretty, and, besides this, has already warmly attached herself to me; but this does not lessen my misery at the thought of losing you, since (though we may never meet again) it is impossible that I can cease to love you. Again I implore your forgiveness, and beseech you to consider, before you blame me,—which, gentle and merciful as you are, you may be inclined to do,—the difficulties of my position. I am quite unworthy of your regard, I know, and yet with what anguish do I contemplate the forfeit of it!"

Mrs. Ashton only read thus far, completely disregarding the expressed hopes of the writer, that Maude might meet with a more deserving candidate for her affections, and also that she would not suffer herself to grieve over what was unavoidable.

"The ~~hardly~~ miscreant—the spiritless creature!" was Mrs. Ashton's exclamation.

never mind, it is well my generosity was not so tried. I always thought Maude would grace a coronet," she continued, her worldly feelings getting the better of her momentary fit of magnanimity. "And if I can but get the silly girl to banish all thoughts of him from her mind, she may make a grand match yet."

The soothing influence exercised over her mind by the philosophical idea, that all is for the best, was not of long duration, for soon fresh disagreeables intruded to overpower her efforts at self-consolation.

"And her trousseau is already ordered!" was her next exclamation. "How provoking! it will occasion such a talk, too. I had all but issued invitations for the wedding, and for there not to be one after all. And yet, who knows? With skilful management I may so arrange that the affair be kept secret, and that by Spring, at furthest, Maude may be settled. The only thing I have to fear is her opposition; for she was, I think, fond of him; but then, all girls are, or fancy they are, attached to their intended husbands. Why should she not like a lord or baronet as well? I must see if it cannot be done. She is beautiful and attractive enough to excite the love of the most fastidious; but then in Lilies arises another obstacle to my designs. She monopolises the thoughts and attentions of every man worth the trouble of winning, so that I must either persuade her quickly to accept some one of her admirers, or else leave my plans in obedience till we return to London, and she to Sussex."

Filled with these and similar reflections—without bestowing one thought upon the heart-blow her daughter had received, but regretting only the outrage inflicted on the dignity of her family, and the probable unpleasant rumours consequent upon the breaking off of the match—Mrs. Ashton sought her relatives, with the intention of imparting the news, and as much of her sentiments thereon as in her profound wisdom she deemed expedient.

Sir Shenton was angered beyond measure, that such a slight should have been put upon his lovely niece, and muttered threateningly of short swords and pistols, forgetful, in his wrath, that the days of duelling were happily gone by. It was fortunate for the safety of both the venerable baronet and the false lover that there was no chance of their meeting, or it is likely that, in Sir Shenton's frame of mind, some injury would have been committed upon the lat-

had begun to despise him, and to learn what a mistaken estimation she had held of his character, so that the way was clear for forgetfulness.

"He could not help what he has done," would she say. "I miscalculated his nature, and gave him credit for constancy and a noble energy of purpose he does not possess. He is very sorry to grieve me so, I am sure, and perhaps suffers more than I do. I hope his wife will make him happy, and then I shall be quite satisfied."

In this nanner would the formerly weak girl converse, when pressed upon the subject of her disappointment, though never volunteering to speak of her lover. Grievous as was the trial, she was supported through it by a fortitude which is frequently allied to natures of her fine sensibility.

Her cousin, upon one occasion, suggested to her that revenge was a more fitting substitute for outraged affection than tame submission; but Maude, with a shudder, recoiled at the bare mention of so unholy a passion, and only heaped blessings upon the destroyer of her peace. The ambitious dreams of her mother were day by day becoming less likely of fulfilment; for although Maude exerted herself to perform her wonted duties, and even laboured to preserve a cheerful exterior, she visibly drooped.

Too much imbued with a sense of right to permit her thoughts to cling with fond regret around the husband of another, still the shock of Leoline's infidelity had been too terrible to be readily forgotten, and had shattered her delicate constitution almost beyond hope of amendment. She became languid and restless; a hectic flush visited her cheek, once so roundly blooming, and now so thin and wan. Made more susceptible by weakness, she caught a severe cold, and a cough, whose harsh grating sound seemed like a funeral knell, perpetually shook her slender frame, attenuated to a mere shadow of its former self—in short, she exhibited all the signs of rapid decline.

Their stay at Brighton had been prolonged, by the doctor's advice, till winter, and long after the throng of pleasure-seekers had left its sands. Now, a trip to a warmer climate was ordered, nearly as a last resource. The south of France was the spot selected by the invalid, as the one whose associations were the most dear, and this choice being ratified by the recommendation of the doctor, it was agreed that her desire should be gratified. Preparations were not long in making; and early in December, when the snow lay thick upon the ground, and the fierce northern blasts echoed themselves amidst the black and leafless trees, Mrs. Ashton and her daughter took their departure for France, and Sir Shenton and Lilius for Sedgley.

The Hall looked desolate and gloomy upon this cheerless December day, and it was with a feeling akin rather to sadness than delight that the father and daughter passed under the well-remembered shade of the elms, shutting in the carriage drive, and entered the frowning doorway of the home they had not seen for so long a time. They had both, they believed, taken their last farewell of Maude Ashton, whose endurance, gentleness, and amiability, had excited in them such a true regard.

That a strong man should bear with patience such a crushing blow to his hopes, would not seem so surprising; but that a young, susceptible girl, whose atmosphere was all trust and affection, should sustain, with fortitude so exemplary, a resignation, constant as it was difficult of attainment, humbled and amazed them.

"Did I, when my Inez died, behave as considerately to all around me, as though I had been a stranger to sorrow?" asked Sir Shenton of his heart, as his thoughts wandered back to his niece. "Alas, no! and yet this fragile creature, visited by grief scarcely less profound, is full of thought for others, and compassion for their woes."

CHAPTER XXI.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

WHEN again settled at the Hall, Miss Bellamy wrote a pressing invitation to Ada Hartop, whom, even in the whirl of her gay London life and her subsequent trouble, arising from her cousin's indisposition, she had not neglected sending, from time to time, such effusions as can emanate only from the pen of a young lady. These letters were descriptive of everybody and everything likely to interest her volatile correspondent: they were sparkling letters, full of racy wit, telling anecdote, and powerful description, but withal strangely devoid of feeling. It appeared, if one were inclined to be hypercritical, and read and re-read those long epistles, that the thoughts of the writer were far away, and the *bon-mot* and the grave chronicling were products only of the head.

Ada was not, however, troubled by a disposition to analyse each word in her friend's composition, and was highly pleased and entertained therewith. The invitation, contained in Lilius's last letter, was accepted with no mean expression of delight; for though Ada expected no rural pleasures in this inclement season, she certainly anticipated a wonderful amount of felicity in the companionship of her friend; and, to speak truth, in that of Herbert Randal, a personage the reader may have forgotten, but to whose existence Ada was by no means indifferent.

“He will doubtless be there,” was almost her first thought, “and to see him but once more would suffice to make me happy for a long time.” At the utterance of which acknowledgment, made merely to herself, she coloured deeply, and experienced a singularly rapid beating of the heart. How much more, then, did it palpitate, upon the second day of her arrival at Sedgley, when the Hon. Mr. Randal made his appearance, accompanied by his college friend, the Marquis of Welgrave. Very different was this nobleman from some of the supercilious, affected Dundrearies who had been wont to make themselves the shadow of the peerless Miss Bellamy. His person was agreeable, without being strictly handsome, his features possessing the marked impress of intellect, refinement, and feeling. Brave, frank, and generous, he had been made leader of a little band at Oxford, whose open praises had, however, failed to spoil him, and in general society his name was a passport to the favours alike of old and young, grave and gay. When it is stated that, in addition to his numerous amiable qualifications, his age did not exceed twenty-five, that his actions were unfettered either by parent or guardian, and his rent-roll enormous, it will readily be understood that he was an object of special attraction to penniless pleasure-seekers, marriageable daughters, and prudent mammas. During the last six, or even more years, his heart had been laid siege to by all the artillery of smiles and sighs, yet had not been vanquished. The citadel would not yield to mere blandishments and beauty, but remained firm, till a legion of perfections, seldom congregated, should assail the ramparts of his reason and thus subjugate his affections. Immediately he was introduced to Liliās, it could be observed that his boasted freedom was in danger, for his eyes were riveted for some moments upon her face, with admiration too powerful to repress, and it was some little time before he could sufficiently recal himself to join with his natural ease in the conversation.

Ada Hartop, from some unacknowledged cause, displayed unusual diffidence of speech, but Liliās took no insignificant part in the discussion (succeeding the trivial inquiries and answers pertaining to the local news), which turned upon the common theme of authorship, and the style of her criticisms and observations still farther engrossed the attention of the Marquis.

Without the least shade of egotism or undue confidence, she delivered her ideas with a quiet dignity that had become habitual, and, connected with the graces of her tone and gesture, was perfectly resistless in its fascination; nor were her opinions incorrect, being the result of discriminating judgment, and, for the most part, reflection. Lord Welgrave listened like one spell-bound, and unconsciously was led to revoke many of his previously formed convictions and theories in favour of hers.

"What a syren she is!" exclaimed he abruptly to his friend, as they were returning to the home of the latter. "With her sweet voice, ravishing smile, and glorious face, she would make a man believe anything she chose."

"Yes, she is a divine creature," answered Mr. Randal, with considerably less enthusiasm,—for a man in love is the least capable of appreciating the charms of any woman besides the adored; "do'nt you think, though, her golden-haired, blue-eyed friend more loveable? I allow Miss Bellamy's manners are most enthralling, but she appears to me as dangerous as she is handsome. I always, for my part, shun your magnificent women; while goddesses in seeming, I have a troublesome notion that they are demons in spirit. However, I have nothing to say against Miss Bellamy; she may be harmless enough; but by my faith, Welgrave, I would not like to cross her, nor yet become the victim of her enchantments. Give me a gentle, submissive girl, who twines herself around you for support, and not the proud, self-sufficient woman, who, repelling all sympathy and aid, is content to stand alone."

"I know," answered the Marquis, with an air of profound commiseration at his friend's want of taste, "that you care only for doll-like beauties, all helplessness and insipidity; while you would fly with terror a woman possessed of spirit. Well, you are quite welcome to your baby-faced, pretty Miss Hartop, only leave me to strive unrivalled for the favour of the peerless Liliás."

"Take care," said Mr. Randal, warningly, "that you do not get so far entangled in the web of your Circe that you cannot extricate yourself from her toils, when you may have the desire to do so."

"Impossible!" was the emphatic rejoinder of his lordship. "To love so beautiful, so high-souled a girl, is in itself an honour; and to be rewarded by her affection would be happiness so great that no man who had experienced it could possibly desire her hold upon him to be relinquished. You are prejudiced."

And undoubtedly he was; his love for Ada blinding him to the many excellencies of Miss Bellamy's character; but not more prejudiced against Liliás than Lord Welgrave in her favour. In that one short interview, the fatal dart had entered his breast, and let events turn as they may, he will be the slave of Liliás's charms for ever.

Women are never blind to the effect made by their beauty upon the unfortunate male portion of society, and few, however kindly their sympathies, but secretly rejoice in the writhings of their victims, encouraging instead of repressing the ardour of their admirers, when perhaps they entertain no intention of accepting them as husbands. Miss Bellamy was no exception to the first rule, and

was quite cognisant of the impression she had produced upon her new acquaintance ; but it would be unfair to assert that the knowledge was productive of pleasure to her. She had as little desire for admiration as it is possible for a captivating girl to have. She was aware of her power, that was enough, and if in secret she exulted in it as a means of triumph over her slanderers, she used no fictitious arts to increase it.

Whatever it was that had rested so heavily upon her mind, the result of Sarah King's application to the advertisement inserted in the *Times* of the July preceding, had succeeded in banishing, and though she might suffer occasional relapses of moodiness, when any allusion was made to the past, or she received a letter from Owen Arnold, dictated by feelings too warm to appear under the garb of friendship, her demeanour was more remarkable even than it had been prior to her London visit.

Now she paced the room with the old impatient step, the workings of her mobile features plainly evincing the existence of a fierce inward struggle. The contest was between her integrity of purpose to the absent Owen, and her inclination to turn to account the evident passion the Marquis of Welgrave had conceived for her. Prolonged and hard was the battle, and though many a time her sense of honour, and incipient regard for her lover, were near conquering, eventually interest triumphed, and with a pang of remorse and pity for him she was about to wound so cruelly, she resolved that should the Marquis propose she would accept him. In arriving at this decision she was helped by no predeliction for him. How could she be, when she had been in his society scarcely two hours? Not but that she was fully as impetuous in forming attachments as his lordship had proved himself to be, only in her case there was no want of excitement, and she was therefore less open to tender impressions.

Her plan of acceptance found its origin in a craving for a securer position than she felt the one she now occupied to be. Upon a head protected by a diadem she imagined no slight or suspicion could fall ; that, elevated to the rank of Marchioness, she would be above the reach of scandal. Thus falsely did she reason, and in the miscalculating schemes of her uneasy brain drew semblances of peace. Would it be in her favour at the final day of reckoning, that she hesitated between her worldly advancement and the guilt of perjury? Upon her had been bestowed a mind whose strength should have preserved her from the fatal quicksands of deception.

The wild suggestions of her untutored passions, not ignorance of the right, had first lured her from the flowery path to the broad rugged road of sin ; and doubly thorny was the track of guilt to the unpractised step of this young creature, with her thousand lofty

impulses and virtuous promptings to draw her from it. Unlike the hardened wretches who have accustomed themselves to the long train of wickedness attendant upon one evil deed of magnitude, she had no thought, when her first decline down that steep descent had been made, that it would never more be in her power to recover her lost position, but that, little by little, she must travel the dark path of infamy, till her accumulated transgressions would bring her at last to the bottom of the dread abyss.

It was a long time before Liliás could gain the mastery over her feelings, though when at length she became more composed, she went out to join her father and Ada, who were taking a stroll upon the lawn before the house.

The atmosphere was biting and cold, but the hardy baronet and his thoughtless young companion heeded it not, delighting as much in walking upon the crisp brown tinted grass, whose only relief lay in the dark green shrubs, as in wandering through grounds fragrant with the odour of flowers, and impregnated with summer's warm breezes. To them, in their cloudless serenity of mind, the bleak Christmas prospect was as agreeable as any other; but to Liliás the bare branches of the trees, the moaning of the wind, and the monotonous rolling of the angry billows, were representatives of desolation and misery, as complete as that which found a home in her breast.

Ada's merry laugh and Sir Shenton's sonorous tones struck discordantly upon her ear, for their happiness seemed more plainly to separate her from them.

"What sympathy can my sorrowing soul have with theirs? Can there be affinity between me and those so utterly devoid of wrong to their fellows?" Liliás asked this of herself in an accent of intensest anguish, and as the answering cry, "None, none!" rose from her conscience to her lips, she turned into a bye path to shun their sight.

Late that night, when all were at rest in Sedgley Hall, and the winter blasts, howling with vengeful fury around it, alone broke the solemn silence, Liliás commenced the disagreeable task of informing Owen Arnold that he must entirely forget her, as she was about to be married; reminding him of her stipulation that she should be free if, within the limited period, she met one whom she could love better than himself. She did not put the climax to her dissimulation by averring that her affections were elsewhere bestowed, but by claiming her absolvment from the contract she left him to understand this. There was no doubt in her mind that the opportunity of becoming Marchioness of Welgrave would be given her, yet should events turn out differently from what she foresaw, she could still, by a word, bring to her feet suitors not unworthy to

stand by him in point of rank, and, but for her repugnance to a May and December union, she might have changed her name for the title of Duchess. While her independence was fettered by her promise to Owen Arnold, it had been useless to contemplate a change of position; but this bond she considered her letter would serve to wrench asunder, when nought remained to embarrass her choice.

Relieved by the conclusion of this distressing piece of business, she had nothing to do besides await the issue, having fortified herself by the resolution to let no inducement influence her actions, save the all important one of concealment; to the furtherance of which end, Lord Welgrave's, Owen's, and her own peace must be sacrificed. Even in her selfishness, engendered by fears for her security, she shuddered at the wrong she contemplated perpetrating against the Marquis, by taking upon herself the position of a wife, when she could be such simply in name, when the warm current of love she should have carried to his hearth, was frozen within her, and the holiest workings of her nature made abortive by the ever-present mystery of her life.

LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU

BY THE COUNTESS VON LAUENBRÜCK.

CHAPTER VI.

THE gong sounding for dinner warned me to put away my letter to Cuthbert, and make some hurried alterations in my dress. On descending to that meal, I found the ladies in pretty demi-toilettes, and the gentlemen in morning costume. Graf Karl, the Count's handsome brother, got up most irreproachably in the English style; being an Anglo-maniac, he got all his clothes from England, as I afterwards found, and Fritz, in a faint copy of his uncle's garments, which was not altogether so successful; the painter, the doctor, and the secretary all wore "frocks," as the indispensable swallow-tail is called in Germany; the Herr Forester appeared in his "joppe," turned up with green. The dinner, which was somewhat long, but excellent of its kind, was served *à la Russe*, the table prettily decorated with fruit and flowers. I now observed what the duties of the *chasseur* were. His first was to carve, which he did very skilfully, at the great sideboard, and with incredible rapidity; sending his satellites, two stout, handsome Mecklenburgh footmen, to and fro, from sideboard to table, every five minutes, with some fresh and admirably dissected plate. I inquired what this name of "*chasseur*" really meant; since I observed that he had the keys of the wine-cellar, saw that every one's glass was duly replenished at table, and directed the footmen in their movements, standing during the latter part of dinner, grave and immovable, behind his master's chair. These appeared to me the functions of a butler, rather than of a *chasseur*, according to the literal translation of the name; but Brunhilda explained to me, that though the primitive duty of a "*jäger*" is to follow his master in the chase, to hold and load his guns, to clean the same, to train his dogs, to seek out the best spots for bivouacking, and to keep an account of the slaughtered game, yet that these primary duties had by degrees widened themselves into secondary ones, so that Count Lauenbrück's "*Lieb-jäger*," combined, with the exercises of his own rougher duties, the functions of valet, butler, and groom of the chambers.

After dinner, Brunhilda proposed showing me the interior of the Schloss. "Later in the afternoon we shall pay you a visit, Mr. Secretary," she said; and that functionary declared himself greatly honoured. "

"There are ten reception, or sitting-rooms on this floor,"

said Hilda, walking through a succession of blue, yellow, green, and crimson drawing-rooms as she spoke, "terminating in this little octagon room, which, as you see, is wainscotted and ceiled with inlaid woods, and which, as you do not see, is full of sliding panels, and several closets." She pressed a large sculptured pear as she spoke, and the panel swung round, revealing a roomy cupboard. "Here, in Napoleon's time, a great deal of plate was concealed," she added, "and even now, my mother-in-law keeps many of her valuables in this room, but in hiding-places of which she has the key; here are her apartments," and she opened a door through which I caught a glimpse of a large bed-room and a small boudoir beyond; "my father-in-law's rooms communicate with these, but are always entered from the other side."

After this, she led me up a wide stone staircase, and along a broad vestibule, into the "Ahnensaal," or Hall of Ancestors, a huge gloomy room—gloomy in spite of its ten great windows placed opposite each other, gloomy in spite of its loftiness and magnificent white ceiling. The walls of this room, wainscotted with dark oak; the polished oaken floor, the numberless family pictures, all let into the wall, without the enlivenment of gold frames, struck me as being especially grim. Every variety of costume was to be seen here; every variety of physiognomy and expression; some faces dark and sinister, some cold and hard, others morose and wicked, others, again, weak and sensual, or simpering and vacant, or bland and mild, or bland and vapid; the be-wigged and be-ruffled, the be-patched and be-powdered, the coarse, the effeminate, the sleek, the gallant, the fair, and the false, *à discrétion*, and in a bewildering medley, destructive to all theories of family likeness. "Don't ask me anything about them," said Brunhilda, laughing, in answer to a question of mine, "I only know that they're a set of grewsome old frights and I hate this gloomy old 'Ahnensaal' beyond all words; I never come into it when I can avoid doing so. We should have brought the Secretary with us; he has all their histories and pedigrees at his finger's ends, and delights to honour their memories. That," said she, stopping before the picture of a lady dressed in green velvet, with powdered hair and cruel black eyes, "that is the Countess Christine, who is said to have murdered her husband, and in consequence of this little playful outbreak of animal spirits, was fetched away one dismal autumn afternoon, in a black coach by a headless coachman, driving four headless horses." She laughed a little nervously as she spoke. "Lots of people have seen the coach, and the coachman and the horses," she said, looking away from the picture, "but then they are such a superstitious set here, they will believe anything; and no wonder, in the autumn, that they dream dreams, and see visions; for oh!" she said, shivering,

"Lauenbrück is such a dismal place in autumn, when the trees are bare, and the birds have all taken flight, and the earth is dark, and chilly, and damp, and mists rise up from the moat, and the wind goes sighing up and down the empty avenues, or wails round the house, or sobs and screams in the chimneys, and up and down the passages, —ugh!" She stopped, and turned quickly away. I was sorry to hear her speak thus, though I knew not why.

"Look at this picture! it is a Rembrandt, and considered very fine." It was a full-length portrait to which she called my attention, of a middle-aged gentleman, who, hat in hand, appeared to be advancing down the room to meet us. "Christian Ludwig, Count von Lauenbrück," stood in one corner of the frame: no doubt a wonderful picture. "But come away!" said Hilda, hurrying me along to a door at the further end of the hall, where, however, I stopped short, dazzled by a vision of such rare loveliness as I had never seen before. Years had passed, and Time had graven lines on the fair face since that portrait had been painted, and yet it was unmistakable. "Irene, Countess von Lauenbrück," stood in the corner of the frame. What a vision of glorious loveliness! what perfection of womanhood! what infinite grace, and tenderness, and beauty! Next to the countess's picture hung another, also exquisite, but what the rosebud is to the rose—what moonlight is to sunlight; what the wild flower is to the rich exotic—fresh, and young, and dewy; tender, soft, and shadowy; somewhat pensive, too, and gentle and delicate!

"A sister?" I asked.

"Oh, no! there are none but Lauenbrücks here. Their daughter."

"Theirs?"

"Yes!—did you not know? She died on her sixteenth birthday. They never speak of her; but they go every day to her tomb. Oh, come away!" she said, grasping my hand, "come away—it is a gloomy place; we shall get so sad if we stay here."

I followed her; but, looking back at Count Lauenbrück's portrait, surrounded by his sons and daughter, I no longer wondered at the sad expression of his face, which at times I had been so puzzled to account for; nor at his wife's subdued, gentle manner. I knew now that they were yet inwardly mourning the "tender grace of a day that was dead," and yet longing for, and regretting, —oh, how bitterly, they alone could know,—

"The touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

We had entered the ball-room, a spacious apartment, lined with crimson velvet benches, hung with chandeliers, and curtains

of the same material as the sofas, whilst the floor was prettily laid down in "Parquet," and a small gallery at one end completed the arrangements. "This is something like," said Hilda; and seizing me round the waist, she waltzed down the room at a tremendous pace, humming a tune all the while: then she flung herself on to a chair, and burst out laughing. "I'm all right now," she said, and sprang up with a lively restlessness marvellous to behold. "Come on! this is the billiard-room."

"What splendid tapestry!"

"So they say; for my part, I only see some faded old worsted-work, representing unpleasantly plain men and angular women. Come into the next room, there is more of it, and better of the kind, I believe; it was brought from some old ruined schloss in one of the Rhine valleys, where some of the old Lauenbrücks lived in the good old marauding days. They had possessions in Hanover and Brunswick, too, and some old crusading Lauenbrück brought this shabby little flag with him from the Holy Land, whither he wandered in the train of Henry the Lion. If you care for such things, I believe this armour is curious. This silver crucifix was found in the dungeons of the Inquisition, somewhere in Spain; also these thumb-screws. But let us make haste and go to my rooms, which I flatter myself you will really find pretty."

Away she whisked, pausing in the sunshine to talk, to look out of window, to sing; but, as it seemed to me, skimming quickly through the shady places, avoiding all gloomy nooks and corners; paling in the dark—blooming, glowing, laughing, and chattering in the light. In a few minutes we reached her rooms, and, opening the door, she bade me enter. I could not but confess that Hilda's delight in her own apartments was justified. She led me into a handsome oak-panelled dining-room, the darkness of the wainscoting relieved by the coats of arms of her own and her husband's family, picked out in bright colours and gold in the centre of each panel. A superb carved oak chimney-piece, lined with Dutch tiles; a clock and two bronze candelabra; high-backed carved oak chairs, and deep claret-coloured curtains, inside of which hung delicate white lace ones, completed the furniture of the room, with the necessary additions of table and sideboard, all of carved oak; the floor was uncarpeted and polished, but she told me in winter they had drugget laid down; at present the room was little used, as they dined with the rest of the family downstairs. From the dining we passed to the drawing-room, where green curtains, carpets, velvet sofas, and *causeses*, a variety of singing birds, and an abundance of flowers in stands, made the room a perfect bower; the white walls with gold panellings giving it an appearance of modern elegance perfectly refreshing after the

gloomy chambers through which we had lately passed. "Here is my boudoir," said Hilda, as we moved into a small snugger, the walls of which were hung with bright pink, and adorned (or disfigured) with scores of photographic portraits of all Hilda's intimate friends. "Dear me!" I said, "what a pity to spoil this lovely paper by hanging all those little pictures on your walls!" But Hilda did not seem to hear me, and, as I afterwards discovered, this was a much-approved German custom; it was, perhaps, as well her attention was distracted by something else. So we passed on to her bedroom, and thence through her husband's dressing and sitting-room out into the "Ahnen-Saal" again. "You have not seen half my dominions yet," said Hilda, tripping down the stairs, and pausing for a moment in the hall 'ere she dived yet deeper into a subterranean abyss which I saw yawning a few steps from us, and spanned by a low, wide arch. In a few minutes more I found myself in the *souterrains* of this vast Schloss, and heard with surprise, verging on awe, that subterranean passages, cellars, and caves, extended from one extreme point of the chateau to the other. Hilda led the way through some of these gloomy crypts till we arrived at the kitchen, which, being lighted with larger windows, the ground being dug out and bricked up so as to let in light and air, was a cheery enough abode. Here a gaunt spinster with a soup-ladle in her hand, and a bunch of keys hanging from a leathern strap at her side, advanced to meet us. "My cousin from England, mam'selle;" said Hilda; "I've brought her down to show her the underground regions; open the larders for us, if you please." A number of maids were busy washing vegetables, peeling potatoes, and scraping carrots and turnips, preparatory to the evening meal. I stopped surprised before the potato-peelers; buckets-full were ready, and yet the damsels went on peeling as if for dear life, after having stood up for a moment and muttered some greeting as Hilda and I passed. Hilda's quick eye caught the wonder expressed in mine. "Those are for the servants' supper," she said; "you know our people live almost upon potatoes, and every good housewife boasts that she knows at least fifty different ways of cooking the same; we will show you some of the fifty before you leave Lauenbrück." I now learnt that Brunhilda had the entire management of the whole household, and that second to her in authority on domestic subjects was the functionary now before us, whom Hilda had spoken to as "mam'selle," this being the received mode of addressing a housekeeper in that part of Germany, and, indeed, all over the northern provinces, without the slightest reference to the so-called being wife, widow, or maid. In this the German element in the house peeped out, that Hilda, though high-born, pretty, and accomplished, and skilful in

all a lady ought to know, was yet a thorough housekeeper. The whole machinery worked under her superintendence, and not superintendence alone, for on great occasions I have seen her busy as the busiest ; plunging her little hands into butter and flour, and sugar and cream, whipping eggs and rolling pastry with a dexterity that positively took my breath away, and caused me to gasp in impotent envy. Ah, me ! what wonderful pies and tarts, cakes, creams, and jellies, I have seen confected in that subterranean kitchen, and how busy Hilda's little white hands would be as she showed me the marvellous mysteries of modern cookery. "I know you English ladies don't do this sort of thing," she would say, looking up from her labours ; "but we are taught to cook, and are sent into the kitchen to learn the art."

"Our servants are better than your's, I suppose ; that may be one reason ; for when we engage a cook, we expect a cook, and that she shall do the cooking her name seems to pledge her to ; but here, according to your account, the ladies do all the cooking, at least in small households, whilst the maids stand by and look at them, and wash up the pots and pans afterwards !"

Hilda smiled. "You are right there," she said ; "our servants are miserably unpolished and ignorant : but, I assure you, a German servant who saw her mistress never come into the kitchen would soon begin to take liberties ; would despise her for being a bad 'Hausfrau,' and in the end would probably begin a system of thieving, under the impression, either that her mistress was so rich that it didn't matter, or so stupid that she would never discover it."

"But do you mean to say, that if I came to live in Germany I must go into the kitchen and cook ? I never would do so ! Cuthbert would never allow it : he would be disgusted with me if I came into the drawing-room with my face red-hot, and my hair smelling of frying-pans"——

"Do not be so hot about it, *ma chère*," Hilda would say ; "you English ladies, who dress all at once in the morning, could not go into the kitchen in that costume, therefore it is that we cover our hair with a cap, and put on *peignoir*, knowing what we have before us, and that these can't be flung off as soon as we are released from our domestic duties, and desire to appear before our fellow men."

"But you do not mean to say you *like* cooking ?"

"I do not *dislike* it : indeed, it has often been a great source of amusement to me at times when I have felt dull, and not had anything particular to do ; besides, think of the triumph I feel when my father-in-law, who knows all the most famous *chefs* in Europe, praises one of my confections !"

There was some poetry in this, I allowed, and began to think

of delighting Cuthbert also with wonders of the gastronomic art, when I remembered that the poor dear fellow never knew whether he had been eating salmon or soles, beef or veal.

"Just for amusement, I should not mind it once in a way."

"Ah! but that is not enough," said Hilda. "Just as your grand English cooks would look down upon you if you went into the kitchen, so do our stupid German ones despise us if we stay out of it; the greatest reproach they can make you in Germany, if you are otherwise a decently conducted young woman, is to say you are a bad 'Hausfrau'; and not only amongst the servants, but amongst their mistresses, is this crime looked upon as unpardonable, and to be dealt with most severely."

"Well, thank heaven," I would make reply, "that our English ladies are not expected to toil, and spin, and bake, and brew;" though my heart misgave as I uttered this fervent thanksgiving, and visions of horrible domestic dilemmas and difficulties, incident to young married life, rose up in spectral shades before my eyes, causing me, whilst the words were yet upon my lips, to regret that English ladies, as a rule, are taught, and, like Gallio, "care for none of these things."

"With you, all these things are different," Hilda would simply reply, "but we must have a little practical knowledge, as well as theoretical, in order that we may be really mistresses of our maids, and masters of our men; we must know, not only when and where a screw is loose in the domestic machinery, but we must be able to set the loosened screw right again, and wind it up to working order."

Then I thought of my Gorgon upstairs, and groaned in the spirit. But I remained true to my colours, and held out to the last. Yet, secretly, I envied Hilda her aptness at household affairs, her energy and pleasure in the same, and, by degrees, began to wish that we were taught a little more in our maiden life at home, of beef, and mutton, and butter, and eggs. In England, girls of a very different class to that of which the young Countess of Lauenbrück was a member, are brought up in total ignorance of domestic economy; their obscurity on all practical points is utter; their horror at such knowledge being expected of them would be very real, and hearty, and sincere. And yet, I do not think the cakes and ale need necessarily be of inferior quality because they are home-baked, and home-brewed; and Hilda certainly never appeared the less a lady in my eyes for that she had whitened her plump hands in the flour and cream, or had dipped her pretty fingers into the plurality of excellent pies with which we were regaled on occasions such as those to which I have referred.

I have suffered, and very acutely in later days, from much and continued talking about these things; for the ladies of the land

in which I dwelt love to exalt their favourite virtues. Many a weary hour have I passed, listening, with a sort of dull and desperate patience, to comparisons—especially “odious,” it seemed to me—of bacon and pork, of pigs and geese, and ducks and calves, of hens and chickens, of soups, and gravies, and sauces. At such moments I have groaned in the spirit, and kept silence, lest I should betray my ignorance, and for ever lose my character. And, oh! with what unctuous enjoyment would these greasy details be discussed: and, oh! with what rapturous pleasure these *minutiae* elaborated.

Now, though all these things might be very good things (at the fitting time and place), yet I cannot think the talk of food, in itself, either a profitable or savoury subject; and therefore it was that some of my best German friends quarrelled with me, and were angry that I did not want to eat my cake and have it too. “We are not ruminating animals,” I would say, “and I don’t care to chew the cud of these culinary memories.” And then they called me a bad “Hausfrau,” and looked down upon me with virtuous indignation. But this belongs to a much later period of my history than that of which I am now speaking.

By the time Hilda and the “mam’selle” had shown me all their domain, I was so thoroughly tired that I excused myself from the proposed invasion of the secretary’s sanctum, and went upstairs to baby. At half-past seven the first gong sounded for supper; at eight we all sat down to that meal. We passed the evening chatting, and at ten o’clock I was glad to say good-night. Thus ended my first day at Schloss Lauenbrück.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE was business at the court-house the next morning, as I became aware on waking. Looking out of the window, I saw several waggons arrive, and deposit their loads of peasants and farmers, and presently an old-fashioned *caleche* drew up, and a portly, grey-haired man stepped out, followed by another with a blue bag under his arm, and disappeared beneath the doorway. There was a good deal of whispering and nudging of elbows amongst the peasantry, as the little secretary came out of his dwelling opposite, followed by a functionary in blue (who, as I afterwards learnt, represented, in epitome, the rural police staff), carrying several large keys, which I immediately decided must be those of the prison cells beneath his own abode. A row of some ten or fifteen old women, with immense poke bonnets, coarse blue aprons tied tightly round their persons, and with the very boniest legs I ever beheld, were on their knees, weeding the drive imme-

diately before the Schloss. Each aged female had a small knife in her hand, with which she dexterously spirted the weeds up into the air, leaving "tracks" as she went. They all looked up apathetically as the various waggons arrived, and continued to stare whilst each deposited its occupants, when they would simultaneously fall to work again, like a division of well-trained soldiers. They all had their backs to me, and were making their retrograde movement in a slow line towards the court-house. The effect was more singular than charming when they turned round their heads, still resting on "all fours," and, in this position, surveyed the arrivals from beneath the shelter of their funnel-like poke bonnets; but yet more amusing it was to see how, when the little crooked secretary and his stalwart satellite, bearing the insignia of office, appeared, they all, as with one accord, and as though an electric shock had run through their ranks, skipped up with a vivacity perfectly incredulous in old women with such singular legs as their scanty garments had revealed to my astonished eyes; and then performing some wonderful gymnastic reverences, fell simultaneously prone on the ground again, like fire-worshippers before the sun. I laughed aloud, and my laugh was echoed by Hilda, who had stolen into my room unperceived, and was peering over my shoulder at the scene which had so amused me.

"They are all horribly frightened of Quasimado," she said, "and firmly believe he has the evil eye. They cannot be persuaded that he is the cause of any punishments which are awarded, and treat him in consequence with the greatest respect, whilst the lawyer and my father-in-law they scarcely regard at all, and beyond a nod, and a 'guten tag,' would not think of discomposing themselves to acknowledge their presence."

"It was really worth seeing," said I, laughing again at the remembrance of the grotesque ovation we had witnessed.

"The fact is," continued Hilda, "some of the people have been rather severely punished of late years, and this the labourers insist upon putting down to his malevolence; on the other hand, it is a fact that he never ventures into the village alone, but always under protection of the police; our big constable is like a lamb in the shrewd little secretary's hands, and pays him immense respect."

"Which proves the ascendancy of mind over matter," I remarked, laughing.

After dinner the whole party adjourned to the garden, where coffee was served, and after half-an-hour's chat, the gentlemen proceeded to the "Kegel-bahn," or skittle ground, their numbers augmented by the two lawyers, who, it being court-day, had dined

I had, and now prepared, the business of the day being over, to continue taxation in this favourite game of the German people.

We established ourselves with our work in a cosy summer-house, where the sound of the balls rolling, and the fall of the skittles, did not disturb our chat. Count Karl, electing to remain with the ladies, we presently set him to read aloud, and soon all became deeply interested in a volume of Tauchnitz, which Hilda brought down from her room. To my delight I heard there was a circulating library in the next town, where for a very moderate subscription I could get all the last new English novels in the Tauchnitz edition. How often I have sat beneath those fragrant limes, solacing myself with one of those little yellow-covered volumes! How often, in later days, when sorrow and sickness were upon me, and trials grievous to be borne, have I found forgetfulness and consolation in these same little yellow books, and how I have longed to express the gratitude I felt to the genial author of their being! It is far less the *amusement* which we extract from books, in careless idle hours of thoughtless enjoyment, than the soothing and forgetfulness of pain and grief which we draw from their silent pages in the dark hours of life, that makes them dear to us. I have often thought that if authors could only know the numbers of sick-beds they had cheered, the numbers of sorrowful hearts they had solaced, they would be a happier race of mortals than they are.

So Count Karl read on, the book losing nothing by his clear metallic voice and pure pronounciation, till the party coming back from the "Kegel-bahn" dispersed us. The old Count and his wife went out driving, and Brunhilda, Fritz, and I reminded the secretary of his promise to show us the archives, prison, &c., &c. Passing through three rooms, smelling unpleasantly musty, we entered a fourth, where the mustiness appeared to reach a culminating point in impalpable clouds of fine dust, so that with one accord we all began to sneeze, of course excepting the presiding spirit of the chambers, who with much solemnity proceeded to show me various curiosities, amongst others a family tree, most quaintly drawn and illuminated on vellum, dating from the year 700 A.D.; also, bound in stamped leather and gold, a folio containing the charter which made the Lauenbrücks Barons; and a second similar parchment signed with the great seal of Austria, creating them Counts of the Holy Roman Empire: a variety of other parchments were laid before me, with great gold or silver seals dangling to them, the import of which I could not understand, and did not like to ask, since Hilda kept coughing impatiently behind her pocket-handkerchief, and Fritz, walking round the room poking the bundles of

he asked, appealing to me. "I vote we make tracks; what say you, Hilda?"

By which it will be perceived that my cousin's English was of the most familiar description, and that slang had filtered through, even to these remote regions. But, as I afterwards learned, Fritz was as much an Anglo-maniac in the matter of slang as his handsome uncle, Karl, was in the matter of dress. We "made tracks" accordingly, and soon found ourselves before the prison door. The secretary walked down a narrow stone staircase in the thickness of the wall, and in a minute more was unlocking the door of a cell, into which we presently entered. It was not utterly dark. A small grated window near the ceiling let in a modicum of light, which shed its faint rays on a female figure, seated on a bundle of straw. Looking up with an apathy melancholy to witness, the girl rose slowly to her feet. Hilda went forward and spoke a few kind words to her; she scarcely answered, but glanced mistrustfully at the secretary, from him to Fritz, and finally her eyes travelled to me. She was standing with all the light which struggled through the iron-barred window full upon her face. As her eyes met mine a momentary expression of curiosity gleamed in them, and then as quickly faded again, and she resumed her former dull listlessness, as far removed from melancholy as it was from gaiety.

In the cell, which was unpaved, was an immense boulder, to which a chain and handcuffs were attached; but this wretched girl, not having been yet judged, was free to move as far as she could in the limits of her narrow cell. The sand was so soft that our feet sank deep into it, and whilst we stood talking to her, a bright green lizard slid from under the stone and glided quickly into a shady corner, where it was lost to sight.

"My poor girl!" said Hilda, gently, "it is very sad for you here. Do you feel ill?"

"No."

"Have you no book, or would you like some work?"

"Countess, this is against rules," said the secretary, stepping forward and shaking his keys. The girl glanced at him with the gleam of a savage animal in her eye, but she said nothing, and in a moment resumed her stolid demeanor. Hilda, scarcely acknowledging the secretary's presence, bent her gaze steadily on the peasant girl's face, and said, in a clear, deliberate voice—

"Have you enough to eat?"

"I thank you—enough."

"Do you want anything I may give you?"

"Nothing."

"Will you have a Bible?"

"No."

"Books are strictly forbidden," said the secretary's voice.

"In that case, my poor girl, I am afraid I can do nothing for you. If you would express some wish, I would do my best to fulfil it."

"I have none."

"None? Think again. I cannot do much for you, but I would indeed do my best."

There was something infinitely pleading and tender in Hilda's voice; and as she stood there, almost begging the girl for a sign or token, she seemed to me like some beautiful fair-haired angel. Behind her stood the secretary, rattling his keys. Contrasts are effective, if comparisons are odious.

"Let my father know that I am well," said the girl, after a moment's pause.

"That I will do willingly," answered Hilda, eagerly. "And now, good-bye; if you do not dislike it, I will come to see you again."

The girl made no answer. We were all glad to leave the cell. Hilda's eyes were full of tears when we got into the sunshine, and even Fritz looked grave and troubled.

"This must not happen again, countess," said the secretary, as he locked the last door. "Conversations with prisoners are not allowed, and no messages must be transmitted: neither are books or work admissible; in that case, imprisonment would cease to be a punishment."

Hilda dropped her eyelids, as though she would not suffer the expression of those bright blue orbs to be seen.

"Thank you, Mr. Secretary," she said, somewhat haughtily; "I suppose I am responsible for what I do. We are much obliged to you. Good afternoon!"

Bowing obsequiously, and skilfully hiding his mortification, if he felt any, the secretary acknowledged, with a smiling countenance, Hilda's somewhat distant bow, and withdrew to his own dwelling.

"How I loathe that man!" she cried, passionately, clenching her little hand. "I believe he delights in cruelty, and drinks in great draughts of satisfaction from the misery of others; yet—would you believe it?"—turning to me, "he has been twice married, and is now engaged to one of the prettiest girls on the property."

Fritz laughed.

"Take care, Hilda," he said, "how you take to yourself an enemy in the amiable person of Mr. Secretary Fuchs; he is an awkward customer to deal with where he takes a dislike."

"It can matter very little to me," she answered, "whether he dislikes me or no."

"Do not believe that, my dear; the gnat can sting, and the irritation from its bite is great."

"I know you hate him too!"

"I do not love him, certainly; but I do not care to offend him," saying which, Fritz sauntered off, whistling as he went.

I asked Hilda to tell me the girl's history, in whose fate she seemed to take so great an interest. "All these things appear so strange to me, coming fresh from England, that I want to learn more about them," I said, "than I can by the mere seeing."

"The girl, Christina Wegmann," said Hilda, "is not married, and had already two children when the third was born; her betrothed, a selfish, drunken wretch, gave her nothing. Her old father was still alive, but totally helpless, being stone blind. In order to gain bread for him and her children, she worked night and day, allowing herself only a few hours' rest, when her tired hands could labour no more. After the birth of her second child, her master told her that if ever such a thing happened again he would have her flogged, and then sent for a year to prison, with hard labour."

"Have her flogged?"

"Yes, for our people are 'leibeigenen' here, or bond-servants, and the master can have them whipped for misdemeanours."

"But why did not her betrothed marry her?"

"They are not allowed to marry here, unless they have a certain sum of money so as to ensure their not falling upon the parish; besides which their masters object to their marrying, since they lose so much of the woman's labour, through illness and other causes, so that marriages are rare indeed amongst the lower orders here."

"Good heavens!" I said, "what an awful state of things! Is there no remedy for this?"

"At present, none. It appears, after Christina's first offence, she suffered a month's imprisonment; after the second, three; and it was on this occasion that her master threatened her in the way I have described. The poor girl worked with a devotion beyond all praise, for the three dependent upon her, and kept her secret and her sorrow to herself. Shortly before her last child was born, her master taxed her with the truth; but she emphatically denied it. Having no money, she could make no preparations for the little one that was coming, and all this has been turned into evidence against her. The particulars of the crime of which she is accused I do not know; but I know that I pity her from the bottom of my heart, for let it be as it may, she has surely been more sinned against than sinning."

"Can Count Lauenbrück do nothing for her?"

"No; she is not my father-in-law's property. She must be judged, and when her sentence is announced, she will most probably be carried off to hard labour for a term of years in some house of correction."

"And are the people on your father-in-law's estate *leib-eigenen*?"

"Yes; but they are all kindly treated, and scarcely feel their bondage. The worst of it is, that through this system the population is decreasing rapidly, and many people say in twenty years we shall not have a man left to till our ground."

"And yet no one does anything to alter this lamentable state of things?"

"I believe some are trying, but they meet with immense opposition. We are the most conservative set of people here, and hug all our old abuses with blind affection long after the rest of the world has stripped them off, and is smiling at the remembrance of the patience with which they were once borne."

Here we met Count Karl and Fritz.

"Well met, sweet coz.," said the latter; "what are you two discussing with so much gravity?"

"I suspect them of political economy," said Count Karl, "and do not hold them totally guiltless of ethics."

"Do not frighten us with such hard words."

"Nay; 'tis I that am alarmed."

"Oh! you needn't be," said Hilda, saucily; "we have tact enough to adapt our conversation to the tastes of our companions."

"*Merci, ma belle*; no doubt, then, a colloquial treat is in store for me, since you are so amiable as to consider my tastes and capacities rather than your own."

"Your taste, at least, I know to be irreproachable," said Hilda, seeking to mollify her handsome uncle.

"You are too obliging to-day, my dear."

"That which one daily enjoys ceases to be of account."

"Can happiness ever pall?"

"No; but indiscriminate amiability may."

"Ah, my niece, you do yourself injustice."

"But I do not wish to be indiscriminately amiable."

"You cannot help being charming."

"I show, at least, my discrimination in being so for you."

"Fritz, to the rescue!" cried Count Karl, with a merry light in his bright blue eyes. "Here is your satirical little wife launching forth sarcasms at my devoted head, such as I must be an Achilles to bear with anything like equanimity."

"*Ah, mon cher*," said Fritz, comfortingly, "never let her find out your vulnerable point, or you're a lost fellow."

"Then I pity him!"

"Tell it me," said Graf Karl, with stoicism; "I will meet my fate like a hero!"

"Do not be so magnanimous, or you may provoke me in to telling."

"Tell, and put me out of my misery."

"Nay, as I am strong, so I will be merciful!"

"Now you are magnanimous, do not rob me of my attribute."

"Out with it, Hilda! don't keep a fellow in suspense in the remorseless way," said Fritz.

"No, my friend, no!"

"But why not?"

"Because I will not."

"Despotic, but unsatisfactory."

"*Mon ami*, remember what is said of a fair woman without discretion, and do not wonder at my silence."

"Comparisons are odious, are bad taste, are out of date, are inadmissible; and the comparison to which you allude, ungallant in the extreme," said her husband.

"Nevertheless, I will not be indiscreet."

Fritz caught his pretty little wife by the hands.

"Karl's vulnerable point?" said he, looking slyly at his uncle, who I thought was not quite so much at ease as he appeared to be.

"I will tell it you—now let go my hands."

"Directly; tell me first when you will confide it to me?"

"This day ten years," said Hilda, laughing merrily, "if you will remember to ask me! Meanwhile, if I have a weakness, it is for flowers; come, Karl, let me put this rose in your button-hole; and you, Mabel, must wear this one it to your hair."

We had by this time reached the Schloss, and Count Lauenbrück stood at the top of the marble steps, a letter in his hand, and a pleasant smile on his dark handsome face.

THE ICE CONE AT MONTMORENCI

QUEBEC, and Quebec in the depth of winter, with the thermometer at any degree of depression you may choose to imagine; with the St. Lawrence frozen feet deep; with all nature bound fast in an icy chain for months, till spring presses her fetters with his rosy fingers, and at the magic touch she bursts forth once more into life and verdure, may be considered by shivering souls as a place to be avoided; yet, in spite of all this, really, a Canadian winter is not a bad thing in its way. Frost bites are unpleasant, but there is an exhilaration in the clear frosty air, and a music in the sleigh bells, which leads one to brave them. A flushed young face, and a pair of bright eyes beaming out from beneath a fascinating fur cap and snow veil, are not bad things to look upon now and then; and with the fair creature to whom these charms belong by your side, snugly tucked in, and otherwise enshrined in buffalo robe and bear-skin, with two good horses tandem-fashion in front of you, and half-a-dozen other men similarly fitted out around you, slashing along some ten miles an-hour over the hard crisp snow—sleigh-bells jingling and plumes waving—a man may be passably happy, though he be some three thousand miles from Market Harborough, and the thermometer is a dozen degrees below zero. Or, again, what pleasanter place to while away a few hours in than the Skating Rink? This, an enormous wooden structure with a floor of ice, caused by flooding its area, and a slightly raised platform all round it, on which chaperones rest and mainmas mount guard, the skaters rest and musicians play, is thronged by youth of both sexes all the winter's day, who, skimming lightly hither and thither over the glassy surface, go through all the wondrous evolutions of the "inside" and "outside" edge with an easy grace that might astonish the most accomplished members of the London Skating Club. Ah me! Those mad circlings round the ring, when the band of the Rifles, striking up its wildest galop, would send off a hundred or so of young men and maidens flying hand-in-hand in perfect time and cadence to the music, round that icy hall!

Or what would you say to an afternoon's "toboggin?" A "Toboggin" is an Indian sledge made of birch-bark and slender rods, exceeding light, yet strong. The Indian uses it to dray his game &c. in winter expeditions over the snow. We put them to a different purpose. Bear me back, dear memory, to the snowy slope of the glacia of the citadel. I am one of a little group of both sexes clustered on the rampart; we have each our toboggin—

one of us is on the point of starting—he seats himself and is pushed gently over the edge (the ditch is full of snow, it and the glaciis are as one), away he flies, like an arrow from the bow. He steers his vehicle either with his hands or two short sticks, the slightest touch from which is sufficient to turn him to the right or left, as may be desired; but let him beware of bearing too heavily on the snow, or he will spin round at right angles to his course, be ejected violently from his ticklish conveyance, and roll head over heels down the slope, an object of laughter and derision to those above. Oh, rare memory! do I not now, in my mind's eye, see the deftest and most graceful of Canadian girls about to start? But she disdains to sit. Erect, and holding a couple of cords or reins which are attached to the head of her toboggan, she makes the exciting rush, her escaped tresses waving behind her, her lithe figure swaying in easy and graceful balance. Not more swiftly does “swift Camilla scour the plain.”

But of all the many amusements of the long Canadian winter, of which these are but a few ensamples, commend me to a day's sliding down the Ice Cone at Montmorenci. Few things are more exciting, more amusing, or more delightfully alarming.

Come, let us make one of a pic-nic and sleighing party to these Falls of Montmorenci. “A pic-nic?” you ask. “And in the depth of winter!” Precisely so. This is got up by the officers of one of the regiments in garrison at Quebec, to which the invited furnish nothing but their company. Betimes in the day the eatables and drinkables have been dispatched to the scene of action under the charge of the mess servants. It is a glorious morning, and we shall have some splendid sliding down the cone; the clear blue sky is without a cloud; there is not a breath of air, luckily for us, for a nine-miles' drive against the wind to-day might render, on the homœopathic principle, an application of snow to the noses of some of the party necessary. “Sleighs will parade in the Place d'Armes at half-past twelve, and will start at one precisely.” These are the orders for the “Tandem Club.” We will drive early to the rendezvous, and see this gathering of the clans.

Hark! the jingle of bells, and up drives Danvers, the president for the day of the “Club,” which musters strongly this morning, with a handsome pair of black Canadian ponies, green plumes (the regimental colour), and silver bells tinkling on throat and head-piece. He is not alone; one of Quebec's fairest daughters sits by his side. He is quickly followed by Mr. Brownwig in a Russian sleigh, with a pair of “two-fifty” chesnuts, and a bewitching little hazel-eyed beauty under his escort.

Here comes another, trotting down from the Governor's gardens at a break-neck pace. That is Joss—the immortal Joss, who

drives like a butcher, and fights like a hero—bear witness his Victoria cross—and who appears now, making noise enough for half-a-dozen! The “Hatter” by Jove! who will play billiards with you, or shoot with you, or fish with you, or fight with you, for anything you like, and back himself at all; he, too, has turned out in a Russian sleigh, and has the prettiest little “Muffin” possible for a companion. The starting rapidly approaches, and the arrivals are frequent. Here is Lieutenant Wattle and Miss Partridge, and Captain Pomatum in his one-horse sleigh, with something nice nestled under the robes. It is too cold to stand still, so we circle round the “Place,” horses prancing, bells tinkling, plumes—scarlet, green, black, &c.—fluttering, cheery laughter floating around us, and “chaff” pretty thick in some quarters.

And here, while waiting for the start, it may be proper (*en parenthesis*) to observe that, though Canadian girls are less under the eyes of *chaperones*, and have perhaps somewhat more liberty of action than their English sisters, yet that they too possess “the wild sweetbriary fence that round the daughters of Erin grows;” and woe would quickly befall the luckless and ill-mannered wight who attempted to presume upon, or to take advantage of, the innocent confidence which trusted itself to his care.

It wants five minutes to the hour; the president drives out of the ring and prepares for the start. “Now then, gentlemen; all here? Time’s up! Off!” And away he goes up Louis-street, followed in hot haste by all. Up Louis Street—down the Esplanade—along John Street—down Palace Street—past Russell’s Hotel, where Yankees come to the door to watch us pass, turn the never-failing quid, spit, and swear a little at those “darned Britishers”—out through Palace Gate, and along the level to Dorchester Bridge. No delay at the toll-bar, for the last man pays for the party. And now we are in the open country the other side of the St. Charles River, the horses well down in the collar, spinning over the crisp and dazzling surface in fine style.

The road lies parallel to the left bank of the St. Lawrence. On our right is the mighty river, its bosom heaving under fields of floating ice. The river has not yet “taken,” as it is called; that is to say, it is not completely frozen over, so that uninterrupted communication may be carried on between shore and shore; but solid ice stretches for upwards of a mile from the bank into the stream, and the track from the Island of Orleans to Quebec is over it. That black line of dots is so many sleighs and carriages returning from the city to the island, or to Montmorenci. The village of Beaufort is quickly reached and passed, and some two miles beyond it we turn into a field on our right for the short cut down to the inn. A canter across it brings us to the brow of the

precipice that looks over the river, down by the side of which the horses must slide and scramble as best they may. Divers little screams attest the fears of the ladies, but Canadian horses are sure-footed, and there is little danger; even if an upset occurred we should be quit with a tumble in the feathery snow; though if a horse took it into his head to bolt over the cliff it would be decidedly unpleasant. However, with a firm hand, and a quick eye, we are all safe. Safe, did you say? What does that louder shriek than usual mean? We look round, and there is the Colonel's sleigh on its side, and its two lady occupants on their heads! He has driven into a drift and turned over, but nobody is hurt. The horses stand, the sleigh is righted, and the girls, whose Bloomer-Turco-Canadian trowsers, fastened at the angle, have prevented any embarrassing revelations, resume their seats, laughing, blushing, and shaking their ruffled plumes. We reach the foot of the hill without further disaster, and drive up to the inn, whose ready doors are open to receive us,—an old and time-worn dwelling, coeval, like enough, with Wolfe and Montcalm. It may be that those walls witnessed the repulse of the British when the French swarmed out of their entrenchments above, and drove, with heavy loss, our Grenadiers back through the ford below the Falls. Many a poor fellow parted company with his hair that luckless day, for scalping was anything but rarely practised by the Canadian Militia and their Indian allies during the war, as contemporary records show. Its shingled roof is white with snow, and icicles hang from the eaves and glisten in the sun. A gallery runs along the front of the house, which is rapidly filling with our party. A score of young “habitants,” *Anglice* French Canadians, are round the door; these take possession of the horses and lead them off to the stables. We enter the inn to “liquor up”; a glass of curaçoa and brandy is not a bad thing after such a drive, and on this occasion even the ladies are prevailed upon “to smile.”

The inn's best room is a large low chamber, scrupulously clean, the walls decorated with the effigies of saints in all sorts of impossible devotional attitudes, and the inevitable plaster cast of Napoleon in a corner; but, sight more pleasing than saints or the fat first emperor, the tables are being rapidly covered with the good

low runners shod with iron. The intending voyager *sits* on this if he goes with a guide, or *lies* on it (if skilful or foolhardy enough to dispense with one) his head in advance, the legs and feet hanging over the stern of the traineau. These quaint contrivances, which remind one somewhat of a butcher's tray, except that they are *not* hollowed out in the centre, are dragged along by a cord; they are gaily painted, and each has a name; "L'Empereur" "La Reine Victoria," "L' Alliance," and other suggestive appellations, show the bent of "habitant" politics. Seduced by the bright colour of a red traineau with the promising name of "La Bonne Aventure," whose proprietor informs us he is "good for slide, sare," we engage him for the day, a skilful pilot being a reassuring possession, as we *have* not the slightest idea of making the perilous descent alone.

But here we are at the foot of the Falls of Montmorenci, and the Ice Cone is before us. "What is this Ice Cone?" some one may ask. It is simply the frozen spray from the Falls, which, accumulating, becomes in a short time a solid mass of ice, and before the winter months are over, reaches the height of seventy or eighty feet; in shape something like an inverted wine-glass without the stem. It is ascended by a series of rough steps cut in the side. At its base several chambers have been hewn out. One serves as a retiring-room for the ladies; another is devoted to the uses of the men, and here, from a speculative Canadian, may be procured brandy, and divers "drinks," by all who choose to buy. Snug enough rooms they are, too, though the walls are of ice, and the floors of the same. Near the large cone is another, formed by the same agency, but smaller, through being more remote from the Fall, down which the ladies disport themselves. Few try the large one, albeit we have seen one or two who were bold enough to do so.

But now for the ascent; and then—oh, horror!—the descent. Several are already climbing the rough steps, and we join the toiling throng. In a few minutes we are at the summit, and, arrived there, we take a glance around. Far away, the eye ranges over a snowy desert to the distant bank of the St. Lawrence and the grey hills of Maine; while nearer the white roofs of Quebec glisten in the cold rays of the wintry sun. Before us, in the middle distance, lies the island of Orleans, its woody summits

man knows whither. Some half-dozen unfortunates have in fact thus slipped, and so disappeared for ever.

And now to business. The "Hatter" is just off: he slips over the side, and in an instant is out of sight; a few moments more, and he re-appears, shooting across the plain at a tremendous rate; in about half-a-mile his course is finished, and he and his guide (two little black specks in the distance) are seen returning for another trip. Danvers, his black whiskers white with rime, and his nose blue with cold, is about to start. It is our turn next, and before it comes, just a few words as to the emotions of a novice on making his first journey down the Cone. Its shape prevents a glance down the sides: except the limited area of its summit, no standing room is visible within a circuit of perhaps three hundred yards; "craning," therefore, is impossible. You are not in the habit of amusing yourself by sliding down the roof of a house, and you feel that you are on the eve of going through an exaggerated performance of that nature. Did not honour forbid, you might prefer returning by the ignominious, but safer, route you have just mounted by; but that is out of the question; in another minute, quitting your scanty foothold, you will be launched into space; there is no help for it—you must make the best of the inevitable! There is no time for hesitation, more sliders are arriving, and we must make room for others. "Now, sare! all ready, sare?" inquired my red-capped guide. He is already seated on the front part of the traineau, his legs projecting on each side, his heels dug into the ice, to prevent an untimely start. I seat myself behind him, curl my legs round his waist, and place my feet between his knees, take a firm hold of the stern end of the traineau, and commend myself to the care of Providence and my Canadian friend. He lifts his heels; a slight push is given us behind, and—we are off!

Ha, ha! The traineau starts, and bounds clear into the air. I involuntarily tighten my hold. We fall some ten feet, and again touching the slippery surface, bound off again. Another drop, and we are on the more sloping sides of the Cone; we fly down it breathless. In another instant we have reached the bottom—sharp icy splinters, ploughed up by the iron runners, hit us in the face, and sting as shot would—but nothing stops us; we skim over the level at railway speed for some quarter of a mile or more, when, the acquired velocity exhausted, we roll off our quaint conveyance, shake the snow from our coats, and prepare to return. On our way back, the "Hatter" passes us wildly screaming; he, scorning a guide, has made a second trip alone, and with the usual good fortune that attends his madcap adventures. Not so Rand, a young guardsman, nor Bordon, of the —th. They, equally brave, but not



equally lucky, have come to great grief; both have been thrown from their traineaux. Rand is sticking head-foremost in a snow-drift, and is lugged out well nigh black in the face, with his nose nearly broken. Bordon was spilt almost at starting, and has consequently slid down on the seat of his trousers, to the utter destruction of that garment, and with considerable abrasion of the part it covered. He binds up his wounds with his pocket-handkerchief, despatches his servant for another pair of continuations, and slides no more that day.

Reader, did you ever dream you had slipped over a cliff, and were helplessly falling—falling—falling,—until, with a violent bump, you awake, as it were, at the bottom, more frightened than hurt? If so, you have experienced a very similar sensation to that of the first slide down the Ice Cone. The sport, as I have said before, is not entirely without danger; one man was killed and another had his leg broken during one winter I passed in Quebec, by collision with the iron runners of the traineau. Still, accidents do not often happen, and after the disagreeable novelty of the first attempt is over, the bound into the air and lightning-like rush, become wonderfully exciting, and the Cone is a favourite resort all through the winter.

With us, in this instance, the game grows fast and furious. The Cone is alive with an ascending and descending string of sliders; traineaux are darting in all directions over the plain, and tumbles in the snow are numerous. The ladies, too, on their lower eminence, are as busy as we are, and are attended by the less adventurous, or the more gallant of the men. Two Canadian gentlemen of our party astonish us. Not content with the excitement of the Cone, they climb up the precipitous cliff which, rising to a height of between two and three hundred feet, bounds the left bank of the Montmorenci River below the Falls. About half way up the rock they launch themselves on their traineaux. Good heavens! they will be dashed to pieces! Not at all. Rushing down with frightful speed, the impetus they have acquired carries them over the lesser and nearly to the summit of the principal Cone, when, turning, they slip down the side and glide like birds far away over the plain. This is a feat we are unable to emulate, but to Canadians, who are as handy with a traineau as a Madras Indian is with his catamaran, it is a trifle.

After a couple of hours of this it is time to think of dinner, or, to speak more correctly, dinner will be thought of; so with tingling veins and flushed faces, we stroll back to the inn. Here a goodly repast is ready: tureens of steaming soup, mighty joints and pasties, savoury curries, and dishes of snowy potatoes, deck the board. A side-table bears an array of sundry sweets in reserve. A

whole army of bottles invites attack, and mulled port and claret dispel delicious odours. All are quickly at table, and the assault begins, but instead of the jar of bayonets, the boom of cannon, and the groans of the wounded, we have the clash of knives, the sharp popping of champagne corks, and the fire of motto-bon-bons, and merry laughter. The viands stand the attack bravely, but suffer enormously. The Amazons present during the heat of the fray shortly retire, but the men continue hostilities yet a little longer, and dozens of luckless "marines" are victims in the fight.

The rage of hunger and thirst appeased, the field is cleared of all traces of conflict; half-a-dozen of the regimental musicians make their appearance; the soft strains of a valse draw forth the ladies, and soon manly arms are encircling slender waists. Quadrille, polka, and gallop, follow in quick succession till midnight, when the moon, rising over distant hills, gives light enough for our return. The sleighs are at the door; one more "good night" gallop, and we start for home.

The merry bells ring out once more: the horses paw and champ the bit, impatient to be off. We wind up the hill side—a long black line against that snowy background. The level is soon reached, but we do not drive back at the reckless pace we came. Songs from fair or bearded throats, and joyous choruses, swell on the night air. The drowsy peasants of Beaufort are roused by the clatter, and watch us from their casements as we dash through the village street, their dogs yelping savagely at our horses' heels. Sentiment succeeds to song; a hush creeps over our party, and low whispers tell how deeply some hearts are feeling. But be that as it may, we are now nearing Quebec. The bridge is past and we are in the city. The sleighs here begin to disperse, for we must drive the ladies we escort home. All are soon safely deposited with papa and mamma;—all, with the exception of the luckless young lady under the charge of our friend the "Hatter," who, more intent, perhaps, on flirting than driving, lags behind, gets into a snow-drift, breaks both shafts, is without the means of mending them, and has to trudge home some two or three miles through the snow, with his horse's reins on one arm, and his poor little "muffin" on the other.

Our adieux made, and our partners fairly housed, by kind invitation of our gallant entertainers we drive up to the citadel.

BUCOLIC AND CANINE RECOLLECTIONS

IN our last chapter we took leave of our old friend "Turk" as he was being carried away from the death-bed of Mrs. Miles, whither he had been led by an instinctive attachment to his ever constant companion and mistress. Now, might not poor "frail humanity" learn a wholesome lesson from such an example of fidelity as this? Immediately that unwelcome visitor who "does not pause to parley or dissemble," comes among any of us, even in his gentlest and least forbidding aspect, we stand aghast, shudder, and leave as it were in fear the "frail tabernacle," so loved in life, to the silence and gloom of the death-chamber, from which, perhaps, an hour ago, no power on earth could have separated us. Not so with poor Turk; constant as he was through life, so he remained when death came. No sooner had Miles, as he was returning from the hospital, given him his liberty, than he scampered back as fast as three legs, with the occasional use of a fourth, would carry him, and made his way for the last time direct to his mistress. Miles whistled, and called him back, but it was all to no purpose, and poor Turk's departure reminded him, I fancy, that he was now more than ever alone in the world; notwithstanding this, his thoughts appeared to me to be of the future, more than the past, as he jogged along his solitary way back to H——, a widower. I have often thought since, how completely this impression of mine was corroborated by a circumstance which occurred very soon after this event, and which tended to prove that Miles after all was not so much concerned at the loss he had sustained as he was decided about the best means of making good that loss. Taking up his position by the bed-side, Turk waited in vain, anxiously expectant to catch a glance from those eyes which could welcome him no more, and with ears erect, seemed intent on listening for "the sound of a voice that was still." I happened to be an eye witness of this touching scene, and it impressed me greatly, because it was the first instance of death I had ever seen, and this in such strange contrast with life. There lay before me—and I fancy I can see every detail now—all that remained of a woman whom I so well remembered but a few years ago as a merry, bright, sunny-haired girl; and now her chequered and unhappy lot was of the past, and the chief mourner was her faithful dog. A pale and stricken but still graceful form was hers; and I thought, as I gazed upon it with a solemn consciousness of indescribable stillness, that the health which once animated it with "hopes, and loves, and laughter," was winging its silent and mysterious flight into the dim and distant realms of a spirit world. I say advisedly, hopes, and loves, and

laughter, because in that seemingly happy and peaceable example of death I clearly traced the expression of a placid hope of something that was not of earth ; there was a confident look of love, too, which bore the impress of a heaven-directed thought ; and on those pallid features there was a smile, also unmistakeable, a kind of triumphant tell-tale smile which seemed to speak of a victory and a welcome. In all this there was something to me peculiarly painful, and at the same time consolatory. I suppose I was affected the more because I had seen, known, and perhaps taken some little interest in the subject of it during her lifetime, and more so still, because at that period I was more easily impressed than I should be now I am better acquainted with the trials and vicissitudes of a hard world. Notwithstanding this, I can never, as long as I live, forget the last look of that poor woman's countenance as she lay stretched out on the hospital bed ; all the harsh and somewhat haggard expression that trouble had imparted to life had disappeared entirely in death, and left a beautiful and placid look which seemed to reflect the rays of that heavenly glory which rises up in its splendour when all that is of earth is fading, and illuminates the silver outline of the "everlasting hills." But I have dwelt too long on this painful scene, and must needs return to my old friend Turk, and introduce him again to my readers. The foregoing incidents happened, as near as my memory serves me, two or three years ago ; but it was since then that Turk displayed his memorable affection for the old horse, and what I think was at the same time a very proper discrimination and preference. Miles fell ill with the rheumatic fever, and a brother-in-law of his came from somewhere to work the business for him during the illness. He brought a horse of his own, and Miles's old horse was sent to grass at a farm some distance from the village. The coach passed the field in which "Joe" was put twice every day. There was not a house near the place. Turk followed "Joe" into his retirement, and during the whole time the horse was there—for twenty-six days—whatever the weather might be, never left him, excepting once every day, when

I shall now proceed to say a few words about Master Jack, whom I got home safely enough, and straightway handed over to the custody of Jones, my groom. All the ladies of the establishment were delighted with him, and he himself seemed to accept the place and the country as an agreeable sort of invention. He was to be shut up, or, at all events, tied up, for a time, till he became accustomed to the place, but on the second day after his arrival he gained his emancipation from this rule. We strolled out on the lawn just before dinner, and, to our surprise, Jack came almost flying over the high wooden gates of the stable yard into the garden, with what, in sober calculation, seemed an impossible leap. He came up to us graciously, and without wagging his tail, looking us frankly and good-temperedly in the face, with his ears elegantly cocked, the very parallel of a gentleman courteously welcoming us to his garden and hospitality. His patronage was captivating, and the ladies all voted it a shame to deprive him of liberty, so the order to tie him up was rescinded. The whole household had been kept awake by Jack's long and dismal howlings the night before, and it was considered by all, especially one young lady, who was on a visit, and on whose good opinion I set an overwhelming value, that greyhounds should never be tied up, and that my brutal order had been the cause of Jack's very proper complaints. I was quite looked down upon, and some one ventured to establish, as an inference, that overbearing cruelty was one of the weaknesses men had mostly to guard against. That very night, however, my reproach was done away with—cauterised, I may say. I had been asleep what appeared to be about two hours, when I awoke to hear Jack hard at it again. A long swelling and inexpressively plaintive howl, finished with two petulant little barks, sometimes three, and this unceasingly repeated. I was wide awake in an instant at the very idea. Soon I could distinguish voices in Mr. L——, or "the Chief's" room; then I heard a door opened, not gently, but with a jerk; it appeared to stick against the carpet.

"No, my dear. I'll do it myself—I'll do it, whatever may be the consequence. Life's of no use to a man if he's worried like this." I jumped out of bed and opened my door just enough to put my head out, and hypocritically asked, in a bland tone—

"What's the matter?"

"Matter, sir!" said Mr. L——, whose portly proportions I caught sight of as he turned to go down the stairs, dressed only in his trousers, slippers, and night-gown, and with a big stick in his hand. He was in a towering passion. "Matter! it's that d—d dog of yours, and I'm going to kill him, for I won't stand this yap-yapping any longer."

"But it'll never do to——stop, I'll come and give him a thrashing."

"Won't it do?" said Mr. L——, determinately.

As I slipped on my trousers and shoes, I could hear him undoing the bolts of the door which led out into the stable-yard; and, as I ran downstairs, his good lady was calling out my name from her bed. I heard sounds also as of other ladies moving, and one voice especially sweet and subdued far beyond all the rest. "The Chief," as he was invariably called, was pulling at the door violently, but he had not undone the bolt at the bottom. This I pushed back, and he went out into the freshness of the sweet air. There stood the culprit calmly in the lovely moonlight; and as Mr. L—— stepped towards him, he gave a playful bound up to him, and licked his hand.

We all stood quite still and silent for a little time.

"Well," said the Chief, as though he had been waiting for me, but it was a subterfuge, "I thought you were going to——"

"No, you said you would——"

We both waited again.

"Hark!" he said, suddenly, listening; "there's a nightingale: how late it sings!"

"Or early," interrupted I.

"'Pon my word, it is as light as day. How plainly you can see the church!" Then he looked over the little gate into the kitchen garden. "I really must have something done to that walnut-tree, or the squirrels won't leave one on it."

Then we went in again, and Jack was admitted indoors, pending further arrangements.

The next morning we had scarcely finished a pleasant breakfast when there was a mysterious movement at the door, and the maid asked if Jones might come in. The groom came in, holding his cap—the manufacture of which he appeared to be intently studying—in his hand.

"Please, sir," said Jones, "I think as somebody tried to break into the house last night; leastways I'm sure they did, becoss I heerd 'em trying the door in the stable yard, and——"

"Well," said the groom, rather snappishy, for he did not understand why, what he thought, naturally enough, alarming news, should be laughed at. "Well, I didn't see 'em becoss the window of my room looks out the other way, and they was gone before I could get out. I didn't like to wake the family up, sir, so the first thing this morning I went down and fetched Mr. Gedge, (Mr. G. was the policeman), and we examined all about."

The face of the Chief became a little more settled, probably because he felt instinctively that by this time it was canvassed all over the village, how the house had been robbed—what had been taken, &c., &c. He began—

"Well, Jones, it's all a mistake, I think ;" and he leant back in his chair, thrusting his hands deep in his trousers pockets, in order the better to enjoy elucidating the mystery, when Mr. Gedge, in full official uniform, appeared at the door, where he had been waiting outside.

"My dooty to ye, ladies, and to you, sir," said Mr. Gedge, bowing. "I examined the place with Jones this morning, sir : and its quite clear from the marks that the thieves got over the garden wall at the right hand corner, and that they attempted to break in at the kitchen window."

"But how's this?" said the Chief, his face growing longer, and all of us becoming interested. "It's all a mistake. My young friend Mr. — and I went out, and Jones must have heard us."

"I beg your pardon," said the policeman, with a slight incredulous shake of the head, "but did you break the kitchen window—three panes, and get over the wall at the bottom of the garden?"

"No, certainly not."

"Then it must have been somebody. The shutters were shut in the kitchen, it seems, but the window is broken, and the shutter marked as if with implements. There are no footsteps to be traced down the garden, because the parties went down the path ; but in the corner of the garden there are several marks on the brick wall ; two bricks are detached from the top of the wall ; that part of the strawberry-bed is very much trampled, and the melon frames below are much broken, as though some one had fallen through. It is difficult to make out footsteps, but it would seem that they had a dog with them."

A dead silence followed, and then Mr. Gedge, who had been sitting on the ground, rose up and strolled

strawberries, and the melons, which were of some rare sort from Dropmore. Presently, they all came trooping down the garden to the corner, and it was very plain to some of us, though Mr. Gedge was ominously quiet, and had not given up the incredulous little shake of his head, which betokened his wise moments, that Jack had been there spending a wealth of misplaced perseverance in trying to clamber up the very high old wall, on which was clearly enough the marks of his feet and claws, but which was just too high for him. Every leap and fall had been to the detriment of the new strawberry plants. He had probably succeeded, perhaps by some stupendous effort, in getting his fore paws on the top of the wall, and pulled down two of the loose old bricks, with which he had fallen through the melon frames below—and after this sufficient havoc, he had most likely returned, and called us from our beds, to let him into the house. We had obediently and punctually risen and done so! I had been going to take out the Misses L—— and their visitor for a long excursion drive that day. When we thought of moving, Mr. L—— murmured something to the effect that we shouldn't have the horse. I felt done, for mine wouldn't go in harness, at any rate there was one of the party whose fate I shouldn't care to have risked behind him. Mrs. L—— resented this as mean and unkind to the girls and me. We tacitly stood upon our dignity, and did a twopenny martyrdom in aggrieved silence. Within an hour after our jocular and pleasant breakfast, this was the exact and lively state of things. The Chief sitting in grim silence before a little desk at the upper end of the room, pretending to read and arrange some letters; still chafing under his fast ebbing storm of passion, and in reality casting about in his mind how to retract with dignity, and find some excuse to pick up the gauntlet he had thrown down in the matter of the horse. Mrs. L—— sitting close by, with her hands folded, not speaking a word, now she had said her say, but with a determined look, and all the time slightly and quickly fidgetting with only one of her feet, as, crossed over the other, it just protruded from beneath her dress; her two daughters, one on each side of the room, persistently and hypothetically at work on some embroidery—and when one went across to the other, and spoke of some detail in the work, she whispered. Our visitor sitting nearer to the open window, silently and intently at work too, at every stitch her needle going tick, tick, on the thimble, with almost maddening regularity. I standing near the window, leaning near the window, mooning in and out, silent too, and feeling somewhat like a very responsible criminal not wholly found out yet, but just going to be. Jones scrubbing at the chaise in the yard as though he would have the paint off, and not whistling, as was his wont. The cook in an apron grumbling at the kitchen-door, as she was tying a piece

of linen round the glazier's hand, who had cut it as he was mending the kitchen-window. Mr. Gedge, standing under the trees in front of the "Bell," a bright pot in one hand, and with a sort of pitying earnestness in his garrulity, which was full of implied reservation relating to everyone who came, just enough of the occurrence, without sacrificing the record of his own tack or his theory, for them to take a story to their gossips and neighbours. Each one garnishing the little wonder from his own glorious fancy; and finally, Jack, lying on the lawn in the sun, his sleek black coat shining like satin, every now and then erecting his head and ears in a listening attitude, or gracefully licking his forepaw—callous or careless, sleek, handsome, and polished, master of the situation, and almost patronising in his well-rewarded villany. Some dogs *are* like men sometimes.

But the cup of Jack's misdeeds, or our suffering from them, was not yet full; the handsome fellow won his way a little longer. He got out on several occasions, and was away for hours, once for the whole day. On the first occasion, fearing that he was lost or stolen, I spent the whole of a burning hot day with Jones, scouring over the fields and up the scorching roads to seek for him. When we got home, there he was quiet enough, but rather wet and dirty. Col. Powis's keeper came over in the evening with a complaint of my dog having hunted the young game, and done other damage to his plantation, and this, at a time when I would not have offended the old squire for all the hares in the county. Next, one of the horses was lamed by a piece of broken glass in the stable. Jones, when blamed that any should have been there, showed how the dog had upset a rack of empty wine bottles in the place. Then, again, master Jack came up one afternoon and bounded over the gate, pursued thereto by an infuriated shepherd with a fork. The very poor don't have meat every day, but this day a poor family were to share the occasional little scrap, and Jack deigned to enter the cottage-door and rob them of it, directly it was hung to the fire. I heard, too, of a little girl, some miles away, who was knocked down and frightened by a strange dog, and robbed of the mutton chop she was carrying home to her sick mother. I never fearlessly heard this spoken of, nor dared I ever probe the subject; for I felt that it would turn out that the wretched Jack was the identical dog. One day, poor, faithful old Turk pitched into Jack on the high road, and well he deserved it; but he was beaten most unmercifully by Miles in consequence.

matter; she parted her hair on one side, she wore no crinoline, she shot, horrible to relate, in spectacles, but then it was a fluke!

Still there is a point when high water is reached even in the deepest sea; martyrdom may be a long time sublimating, but it can be made complete; every cup will fill in time. I championed the brute for long, and I was not very thin-skinned; but there came a point when I fairly broke down.

There happened a deplorable fire in the village. We had just returned one night, when I could see it from my window. I went direct to Mr. L——'s room, but before I could get so far, heard some one knocking below with the alarm. We were soon out. In a country village a fire is a very different affair from what it is in London; the many engines, the easy water supply, the firemen, and the quick means of communication, make every one feel that there are official heads and hands to deal with the calamity, and that bystanders, or neighbours, can seldom be more than sight-seers. But in our village, every one turns out to help, as each one may, master and servant, rich and poor, to rescue, or to combat, or to work, without reward or distinction.

The fire was at old Cutlet's, the butcher. His shop faced the road, and was built out in front of his dwelling-house. His shop and house stood at one corner of a square yard, which was enclosed by outbuildings on three sides, and by a low paling along the road. At the corner corresponding to the butcher's shop, on the other side of the yard, was Miles's, the carrier's, cottage. The outbuildings, forming three sides of the quadrangle, and connecting the two houses, were all built of wood, blackened with tar, and had common tile roofs. Immediately behind Cutlet's house was the slaughter-house, in which the fire had begun; then came the stable, which was divided by a wooden partition, and used in one part by Miles. The building along the side facing towards the road, across the yard, and right up to the back of Miles's cottage, was a carpenter's workshop and warehouse.

We were there soon after it began and in the first excitement, but not many minutes before the Squire. The fire had begun in

head among the crowd, and to carry out his directions, for he took the command, as of course.

But little could be done. The whole place was laid in ruins, and Miles's cottage burnt too. Cutlet's house, which was better built, escaped; for when, at last, the engine was brought down the road, with many cheers, how slowly the leaden moments seemed to drag with us! how frightfully fast they seemed to go with the fire! and when water was got from the pond, it was used to keep the fire from Cutlet's house.

The stables were behind the slaughter-house, and were the first to burn after it. In Cutlet's portion were a bullock, two or three sheep, and one horse; in Miles's was stabled the old horse, "Joe." The fire was so rapid, that both stables were in flames almost directly.

The cries of the cattle and the piteous howl of old Turk, who was with the horse, were very distressing. The keys of Cutlet's stable had been left in the slaughter-house, so Anvil, the blacksmith, dashed at the door with his big hammer. The sheep were got out, but the bullock and the horse were burnt. When Miles's stable-door was opened the dense smoke poured out, but scarcely hid for a moment the dense fire within. Everyone thought of poor old Turk, and called him and whistled for him, and there was a cheer among the crowd when he rushed out and barked. No one for a moment imagined that, thus freed from the fire, he would go back, but he did, and was rescued when the one effort was made to extricate Joe.

They were saving all Miles's property whilst they could, and dragging his chairs and tables from the cottage, before the fire should reach that corner. It was plain we could not put it out, so every exertion was made to save. When the stable-door went crash under Anvil's hammer Miles rushed across from his cottage to the other side, when I was getting the engine ready, with Mr. Gedge and the clerk. It is impossible to describe everything; the hurry and the confusion, the heat and the noise, the red light and the burning smoke so full of sparks, making the moonlit sky seem so black above them; but in a scene of such confusion and excitement, one is apt to note little things with extraordinary vividness, and in a way to make us afterwards wonder. In all the turmoil and hurry I did so then. I noticed that Miles, in helping to take the furniture from the cottage, dragged the things with one hand only, and did not use his left. When the door was broken in, he rushed across, and then it was I saw that he had close under his left arm a small box.

"He's gone in again! Turk's gone in again!" shouted several voices.

"Dang it, now ; who'll go in wi' me, and help fetch the horse out?" cried a young fellow in a labourer's dress, and red plush waistcoat with pearl buttons, falling back towards the fire, and facing the crowd.

"I will, John, and thank ye," said Miles, as he pushed by me. He then turned, taking the box from under his arm, as though he were about to give it to Gedge, when his eye caught mine ; he stepped up and said, "Will you, sir, please, hold this safe till I come out?" as he said this placing the box in my hands, and went away not waiting for my answer, he turned his face towards me very intently for a second. With the other man he rushed into the very flames, but the litter, and all around, was on fire ; they could not move the horse ; Miles, however, brought out Turk under his arm. The dog was burnt, and he whined and struggled fitfully ; Miles consigned him to a boy to hold, and came towards me for the box, which I placed in his hands.

Now, I had noticed what this was which Miles had singled out from all his property, and would hardly part with. It was a cheap little workbox, of shabby veneer rosewood, and a thin metal line running round the top of the lid, and connecting little circles of pearl at each corner—one of the little circles was missing ; the hinges were broken, and, as I held it, not knowing this, the lid slipped aside. When I put it on again, there seemed to be nothing in the faded and ragged little red tray but a piece of loose cotton and an old brass thimble ! Perhaps it held a memory too, for Miles, of the years gone by, and had come out of Oxfordshire when he helped his young wife from the old hooded cart at the door of the cottage, which was blazing fiercely now !

In a very little time there was another shout, and whistling, and calling for Turk ; the poor old fellow had escaped from the boy, and rushed again into the burning stable. The tiles and rafters had already fallen in from the roof, and now the main part of the blazing front fell inwards. Poor Turk never appeared again, but died in the ruins, with his old friend, the horse. Noble old Turk ! Dutiful. faithful. loving. and a friend even to death. Some dogs may

were burning hopelessly and fiercely. Just at the time I left the engine for a minute, and went across to the cottage, and spoke with Mr. L—— about poor old Turk's martyrdom. I had hardly begun when I heard a cry of horror from one man, and the cry swelled into a roar of execration from many. I darted back to my post by the engine, and looked where every hand was pointing. I saw amid the ruin, and where the charred carcasses lay, that beast Jack, like a ghoul, reared by his forepaws upon one of them, tearing it with his teeth. What I felt is hard to express; my face burned with very shame, and I quietly bent down over the rail of the engine, and worked very hard. He was beaten off with heavy sticks and stones, but he was not caught; he fled into the darkness whence he came. I did not claim him as mine: I did not seek delight in hearing praises of his sleek and graceful form. My championship was broken. This was the last feather on the back of the camel.

It was almost morning twilight when we got home, and Jack met us inside the gate; the groom was there, too.

"Jones," said I, in a calm voice, "I am going to London by the 2 o'clock coach. Go to the "Bell," and let a seat on the box be kept for me; and carefully tie up that beast."

"He gets his 'ed through that collar, sir."

"Then tie him by his legs, his body, his neck, or anything."

"Yes, sir," said Jones, slowly, and awe-stricken.

On the top of the coach that day I chained him down.

"Morning, sir," said the driver, touching his hat. "Taking him back, sir?"

I just opened my lips and let slip out "yes," in an ominous way, as though it cost me dreadful efforts.

"Well he's a wretched vagrint, ain't he?" said the driver, with a perceptible twinkle in his eye. "But he's *'andsome*, ain't he?"

When I dragged him up Gray's Inn Lane, and through the little wicket into Gray's Inn Square, the day was cooling into evening, as I went up the stairs which Turk knew so well, I heard the click of a key, and met his master just outside his door, on the third floor.

"What! brought him back? How are you! I didn't expect to see him for three weeks yet," and his aggravating phrase, "Down, Jack!" echoed pleasantly through the whole house.

Quietly, but pointedly and with dignity, I laid bare some of Jack's sins, not all of them, and then handed over the chain of custody.

"Ah, he always was a funny, skiltish sort of a dog," he said, laughing frankly. "This was his first visit to the country."

“ And he'll be a *very* old dog before I take him there again,” I murmured, in a meditative way.

As I wended my solitary route back to H——, glad enough to be relieved of my troublesome charge, I could not help thinking once more “ that dogs are sometimes very like men,” I was going to say women, but will retract, for *two* very sound reasons, the one because (when I think of poor old Tuck's fidelity) my own personal and private experience prompts me to do so, and the other, lest any of my fair readers should interpret the comparison as an insult, rather than a compliment.

THE BROKEN-HEARTED

"Have I been sleeping, mother?"

"Yes, my love."

"Not long, I think; or, is it evening now?
The light seems softer—dimmer!"

"No, my dear,
You have not slept an hour."

"I thought the lines
Upon the wall shewed that the sun was low,
Or westering to the hills."

"'Tis only noon."

"Is that a bird? I'm better now, I think,
And like to listen dreamingly, to sounds
That come in at the window. I have lain
A little while, and dreamt that I was well;
That I was sitting—as I love to do—
Within the wood. 'Twas summer, and I heard
The turtles roo-too-cooing."

"Willie's dove
Was sitting at the window when you waked."
"Yes, mother, that was it. Where's Willie now?
He used to come and kiss me every day
Ere he went out to school. Has he been here?"

"Yes, love; he kissed you while you lay asleep."
"O, yes, now I remember; some one touched
My lips so lovingly, but then I felt
As if I could not wake, or look to see,
And Willie's off to school? Now, mother, dear,
Open the casement; I feel warm. The air
Would cool my cheeks and forehead. 'Tis not chill,
Since this is sunny April."

"Maggie, dear,
We must be careful! But I'll lift the sash
And let in but a mouthful."

"Thank you, mother.
This is pleasant now! That must be the scent
Of hawthorn that I feel—or briar-rose.

O, mother, I should like to have a bunch
Of that sweet hawthorn. Bring me red and white,
I'm sure 'twould do me good."

"You fancy, dear!

There is no thorn in bloom, nor rose-bush yet.
When you are well, the honey-suckle wall
And hawthorn hedge will have their cluster'd flowers;
But now there are no flowers, save crocuses
And early primrose."

"Mother, yes, you're right.

I see the cherry-tree from where I lie.
And there are yet no blossoms, all is bare;
My senses dream, too, mother, like my mind!
Oh! how I long to get out to the woods!
I'm sure I feel quite strong. We'll go next week,
To gather yellow primroses, and sit
Upon that sunny bank, where now I heard
The grey wood-pigeons cooing. Willie, too,
Will have a holiday because I'm well."

"Yes, daughter, when you're well, we'll go and stay
At the Holm Farm, and there upon the braes
We'll sit and talk. Kitty will bring us milk,
Warm, frothing, from the cow."

"Mother, I'm flushed!

Yes, it is noon—open the casement wide.
The sun is strong—the golden light floods in.
Where am I, mother? Was that Willie now
That stood at the bedside? Is that a flower
You've brought me, Willie? Lay it on my bed.
O, yes, a primrose! Willie, you are kind
To Sister Maggie!"

"Willie is not here.

There is no primrose, daughter mine, you dream.

"Are you ill, Maggie? You are very pale!

And yet you said that you felt very warm!

Wake up and speak to me!"

"Yes, Mother, yes.

I am not sleeping. You were talking now
Of the Holm Knowes. I used to like the Holm,
The little burn ran dimpling past our feet,
And little yellow minnows played in it;

And bees and speckled flies dip't in their wings
To cool themselves for flight! The yellow broom,
The golden furze, the bower! O, mother, he—
He sat beside me then—he said he loved;
And I—I trusted him—gave him my heart.
How many months since, mother? I forget.
Why is it so? I had it all by heart!
Yes, mother, I remember! Bring me down
The newspaper—the old one—in my drawer.
'Married at Thorp,' quick, mother, dear, 'at Thorp,
On 30th ult.,' that was last May, dear mother.
Where are you? I feel chill! Come, mother, now,
And close the casement! Willie! Mother! Come.
Kiss me! I forgive him! Come! Mother! Come."

The golden bowl is broken. Haste not down,
Your child is dead, fond mother! Pause awhile
Upon the stair, and let your grief gush forth.
You did not know your daughter had a secret;
Haste not so fast! Your hopes are dashed, and she,
The sick one, getting well in your fond eyes,—
Is dying—dead. You yet have time when tears,
You do not wish that she should see, are dry,
To glide into the room—to gasp for breath—
To shriek—to kiss your child. The form is chill
That once was beautiful as flesh could be.
We leave you weeping, praying.

Such is life! }

And such one phase of it! The rose's flush,
That seems so fresh at morn, may ere the noon
Be blanched The dove, they say, will close it's wings,
And hide the arrow that has pierced it's heart.
So women droop and die, "while yet their breasts
Are full of milk," and friends and parents grieve
In stricken wonder. Weaning from the world
Is always bitter. Happy they who take
The chastening meekly.

JAMES LEITCH.

"OUT OF CHARITY"

CHAPTER XV.

EVA RECOGNISED BY A FRIEND OF HER INFANCY.

Mrs. TORRING's proposal to invite Miss Varnish, an inmate of the Hall, would bring Miss March into some sort of contact with the family at once. Therefore, the idea, spoken of in the last chapter, was of some interest to her. But it was odd that Mrs. Tarring should propose to invite a person against whom she had spoken so strongly and so decidedly. And Eva said as much herself.

"It is very kind of you, Mrs. Tarring. But I am afraid it would hardly be pleasant to you to have Miss Varnish here; and, from what you say of her, I should not very much like her company."

"Like her company? No! There's only one person, I verily believe, who does like her company, and he's a fool for doing so. But I like to have her here, to tell her of her faults. It's the only way I have of doing her any good. And you know, my dear, we ought to do good whenever we can."

"Certainly, Mrs. Tarring. You know Dorrington Hall?"

"Yes, my dear; I know it very well, or, rather, I used to know it very well. Mrs. Campion—and there's another fool for you!—she drives everybody away, with her sulky, grumpy, frumpy way of shutting herself up, and seeing nobody; and people say, 'Poor thing!' 'Poor thing,' indeed! I don't pity her the very least in the world!"

"Oh! I'm sure you don't mean that, Mrs. Tarring!"

"I *do* mean it, Miss March; and I don't pity her, I say. If she's really ill, why doesn't she have advice? or, rather—as she *has* advice, I know—why doesn't she *take* advice? Why doesn't she go to the seaside, or have shower-baths when she gets up in the morning—if she *does* get up in the morning—or take rum-and-milk to her breakfast?—why doesn't she do what the doctor's order, if she *is* ill? If she's *well*, what right has she to let things

years ago, Mr. Gerald Campion has lived at the hall. They have but one daughter, she's a little silly thing, and I expect to hear of her running away with the postman some day ; its their own fault, letting her have that Miss Varnish about her as a governess. While Mrs. Campion shuts herself up in her room, Miss Varnish is making love to Mr. Campion ; if his wife doesn't die of herself very soon, that woman will soon poison her, I shouldn't wonder. Now, there's a state of things for you ! Ought not they all to be ashamed of themselves ?”

“But do you not think, Mrs. Tarring, that poor Mrs. Campion may have some sorrow, of which nobody but herself is aware ? At least she suffers, we may suppose, as much of distress as she inflicts.”

“Hm—well, you're right, my dear ; and it's not for us to speak evil one of another. Poor Mrs. Campion ! She certainly *was*, when first I knew her, as gay and lively a woman as you would ever wish to see.”

“Then what, Mrs. Tarring, could have changed her so much ? surely, it must have been her health ; or had she ever any accident ?”

Law ! I don't know. I never heard of her having an accident. But I very well remember when first I heard what a turn she had taken. She had been spending an evening here ; and I recollect getting that large portfolio of prints and pictures—you shall see it yourself, my dear, presently ; and Mrs. Campion was looking through it, when, all of a sudden, she let it fall out of her hand, and I thought she was going to faint away. I said, ‘Law, ma'am, you find the room too hot, I'm afraid.’ Well, the poor thing went home ; and when I drove over to see her, a day or two afterwards, I was told that she was seriously ill. And she has been, ever since, in the state of which I told you. It's very silly of her—Patterson, my servant, never could bear her. She never says why, but I know she has a very bad opinion of her indeed. By the way, my dear, you shall look at the portfolio yourself. Please to get it.”

The portfolio was laid on the table ; and Mrs. Tarring began to direct attention to the pictures in it most worthy of remark. At last, she came upon a portrait in water-colours ; and glancing from it to the living face that was bending over the table—she uttered again the familiar “Law !” this time with a greater intensity of surprise than ever.

Eva looked up in questioning astonishment. The old lady's own surprise was very quickly and fully accounted for. The portrait might have been taken from Eva herself. And it was, in truth, a copy of the portrait in Gravelling Castle, taken, very many years ago, by a friend of Mr. Dykhart's, and by him pre-

sented to his aunt, Mrs. Torring. "Julia Somerby" was written underneath it.

"Why, I never saw such a likeness in my life!" the old lady said. "I wonder if you can be any relation to that Miss Somerby? Oh! I beg pardon, I forgot—my nephew told me that you were not clear what relations you had. Excuse an old woman's bad memory, my dear. Look through the rest of those things, and then we'll have a game of cards. But can you play at cards?"

"I play a little: I only know a very few games."

"Never mind, I'll teach you a few more. I'm glad you haven't been brought up quite ignorant of them. My niece that I had with me some time, she and I quarrelled very much about that."

"You couldn't teach her to play?"

"Couldn't teach her! My dear, the creature wouldn't learn. No: she thought it was wrong—nasty, stupid thing! She went off to bed, rather than see her aunt touch a pack of cards with her little finger. Augh! I hate such nasty ways. So the clergyman who brought you up—I understand you were in part brought up by a clergyman—was no *Evan*?"

"I don't quite understand you, Mrs. Torring."

"You don't know what I mean by an '*Evan*?' I mean an Evangelical. Your friend was not of the Evangelical school? He didn't tell his people it would be all up with them if they touched a pack of cards with their little fingers?"

"I don't think Mr. Ferrier had any strong objection to cards, though I don't think he played himself. I think he was at all times rather backward in judging others."

"And you think I am rather forward in doing so? Well, my dear, and perhaps I am. But I don't like to see people righteous overmuch. You know we are warned against that; and I often tell Mr. Grooby—that's *our* clergyman—that he ought to preach upon that text once a-year. I do like the words myself. I always repeat them when anybody finds fault with my playing at cards."

They retired early; and Mrs. Torring inducted Eva into the office of reading family prayers. On the next day they went twice to church. It is hardly needful to say that the cards were heard of no more until Monday. Mrs. Check departed on the morning of that day, entrusted by Eva with the message (in case she saw any

She had at first felt a little doubtful of liking Mrs. Tarring, but sure of liking Patterson, the servant. Now, however, when the first few days were over, her feelings towards these two persons appeared to be undergoing an absolute reverse. She became sure of liking Mrs. Tarring; and the more she penetrated through the crust of oddity which concealed the solid excellence within, the getter satisfied she felt with the protection, under which she had placed herself.

But one or two things in the behaviour of Patterson perplexed her very much. It was not that the woman grew less pleasingly attentive. To Mrs. Tarring she could not have rendered a more complete, nor, it would seem, a more hearty service. But she followed Miss March about with inquiring eyes, and scrutinised her so seriously, although so silently, that, of course, she provoked a great degree of curiosity in her turn.

On the Saturday morning—that is, on the 13th of the month—Mrs. Tarring was poorly, and Eva was left to breakfast by herself. The things were removed by Patterson herself, who lingered in the room, with a show of dusting the table, &c. Eva noticed that, wherever the woman might begin, she ever and anon brought her duster back to the chair on which she herself was sitting. She asked if Miss March continued to find her room comfortable, and waited for the answer as though a negative might doom her to death. Then she began dusting the very chair on which Eva continued quietly to sit, though she would have liked to quit the room. Then she came closer still.

“I beg your pardon, Miss; I think some grease has got upon your sleeve. Just do allow me to take it off,” and Patterson, bent on this duty, pulled up the sleeve towards the wrist.

“Thank you, miss. I think it will do now;” she said the moment after. And verily, and indeed, the work was most efficiently performed. For not a speck of grease could the keenest eye of the daintiest beholder have detected remaining on the sleeve.

Patterson might well regard her work with the triumph which rarely appeared to possess her. But for that day Eva saw very little more of her.

Mingled with all the curiosity with which this rather suspicious conduct filled Eva, there was in her mind an odd conviction, not simply that it might be explained, but that she *had* the key to such explanation; only she wanted the faculty to insert and apply it. It was a considerable relief to her, when, not many minutes later, the post arrived, and brought a letter for herself.

Alas! the remedy was a great deal worse than the disease.

The letter was that which M'Quantigan had hastily written on the previous Wednesday. It had been forwarded to Minchley by Dr. Dowlas (under the advice of Mr. Lewis), and had, by the Ballows, been despatched again to Eva at Chelford. This fully accounted for its delay in coming. Nor could that delay have ever been too long to please our heroine. The contents of the letter are known to ourselves; and the nature of the feelings excited by it, it need not trouble us to guess.

Eva sent it back to Mr. Ballow, begging of him to inform the writer that his claim upon her, as her father, was a baseless and fictitious one; and that he could not be justified in seeking a continuance of the intercourse which under different circumstances, she had not felt at liberty to deny him. Mr. Leyburn, in the division of the late Mr. Gryffyth's property, had insisted that Miss March should accept at his hands a sum of money, as a token of his regard for her upright and discreet behaviour. That money would now, most probably, be lying in the hands of the Welsh attorney.

As Mr. M'Quantignan had written in the honest belief that Eva was his daughter, she should be glad, she said, if Mr. Ballow approved, that the ten pounds which was asked of her, should be given to the Irishman, with a thorough understanding that neither that, nor any other acknowledgment would thenceforth be accorded him. Any danger to poor Mrs. Roberts from his disappointment might be considered as now no longer imminent.

Mrs. Tarring appeared at their early dinner; and as she came in, Eva heard her say to Patterson, who came in along with her, "You can't do it to-day, Patterson; it's too rainy. You shall do it on Monday, if it's fine."

That Saturday was a rainy day indeed. But it allowed Mrs. Tarring and Eva to take a walk in the latter part of the afternoon. They went a short way into the country, and were walking back towards Chelford, when they were met by a carriage.

No one was inside, except one lady, and several inanimate passengers, wrapped up in several shades of white and brown paper.

Mrs. Tarring called out a "How do you do?" to the animated occupant of the vehicle (there was a man on the box driving), and then explained to Eva; "This is the creature I dislike so much,—Miss Varnish, you know, the governess at Deverington Hall."

The carriage stopped; and Mrs. Tarring stepped off the footpath, to inquire after Mrs. Campion.

Miss Varnish was not a plain woman, but she had not beauty sufficient to blind you to a certain slyness in her countenance. She had a way of looking at you, after every word she said, as if asking you whether you altogether believed her. She fixed her suspicious eyes on Eva; they were suspicious towards every stranger.

"You have one of your nieces with you, Mrs. Tarring?"

"No such thing, Miss Varnish. This is a young lady lately come—let me see, out of Wales." Eva was all this while on the causeway, and did not hear what was said of her. "This is Miss March, and she is engaged to be married to a gentleman, who has not got a wife already, Miss Varnish."

"Ha, ha, ha! I see you will have your joke, Mrs. Tarring! Now, how can you be so shockingly sarcastic? You were just now asking about poor dear Mrs. Champion. She is much the same as ever; no change that I can see."

"Ha! now I shouldn't wonder at her lasting much longer than you suppose. And then, Miss Varnish, you'll have *your* joke."

Miss Varnish said something to the effect that Mrs. Tarring was in one of her droll humours "to-day," and then the carriage drove on its way, and our friends resumed theirs.

"Doesn't she look sly?" was the old lady's first remark. "You saw what a lot of parcels she had got? Now, I've not the least doubt in the world that she buys things for herself with Mr. Champion's money."

"Oh! Mrs. Tarring, is it right to say so?—that is, without actual proof of such a thing?"

"'Proof!' I want no sort of proof, except the vicious look there is about her eyes. She has just got the look of those people who go into shops, and buy under false names what they never intend to pay for. However, if she catches Mr. Champion, when that fool of a Mrs. Champion really does die,—why, then, all his money will be hers; and I can tell by her looks, that she'll be very extravagant with it; nor shall I have any pity for him."

Eva proffered no more comments on the subject; only she thought Mrs. Tarring very unjust to be so ready to think evil. And she resolved, if brought into any acquaintance with Miss Varnish, whether in or out of Mrs. Tarring's company, to be pointedly attentive and courteous to her.

The Sunday passed away much as the previous Sunday had done. The Monday weather was quite a contrast to that of the Saturday.

"Now, my dear," said old Mrs. Tarring, in the course of the morning, "I'm going to send you and Patterson in a fly—I keep no carriage of my own—to see the observatory at Deverington Hall. Patterson's brother is the head gardener. She has been telling me some extraordinary things. However, you would like to see it, I am sure, for you're a clever young lady, and ought to improve your mind whenever you can."

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Tarring; it is most kind of you to think of me as you do. Shall you not go yourself?"

"No, my dear; I want to pay some calls in the town. Patterson must go with you; you mustn't go by yourself. We'll have a very early dinner, and you shall go while the day is at its best."

They started, in effect at two in the afternoon. It was a bright September day, nor was the road they went devoid of beauty.

Deverington Hall was three or four miles away from Chelford. It lay embosomed in woods; too closely shut in by them, it might even be thought. Yet, though the constant dweller amongst them might possibly have a right to complain;—no one, who looked from the outside could wish the destruction of a single tree. It was no part of the expedition sent forth by Mrs. Torring to drive to the front of the house. For a purpose greatly and terribly important in view of coming events, we must first describe their manner of arrival. They drove past the lodge-gates which led to the principal entrance, and went a quarter of a mile further on the road towards Bridgewater. Then they came to a gate. Alighting at this, and walking a little way in the wood, they came to another gate, which led into the grounds immediately about the house. Patterson rang the bell, and her brother, the gardener, was prompt in coming. They entered the grounds. There was a path to the right, and a path to the left. The former led (so Eva was told) to the Italian garden and the private entrance into the house. The latter path, with which alone they were concerned, led towards the kitchen gardens, and the observatory, which they were come to see. Patterson had been very silent during their drive; and Eva, thinking that something had vexed her, had been very silent too. They were ushered through the garden, and towards the domed building, which had been erected by Mrs. Champion's grandfather. The gardener held the key;—a pretty sure sign that no astronomer was reigning at Deverington now. The door was opened. "Now, miss, will you please go in first," the woman said. And Eva went in.

There was the great celestial telescope still. There were some other tokens of the scientific spirit now long ago disenthralled from its earthly habitation, and, it might be, coursing freely amidst the works of that Creator to whom it had now returned. Eva looked all around her, and some thought like this came over her soul.

"I thought you would remember *that*, Miss Campion."

"Eva turned herself round. It was Patterson who spoke to her. The gardener was nowhere to be seen. By arrangement with his sister, he had left them to themselves.

"Remember it? Yes, I do."

"And now you surely will remember me, too, Miss Campion; You will surely remember your old nurse, Mary?"

"Mary! Oh, now I see that you *are* Mary. I have had a feeling all this while that you were not a stranger to me. Oh, **Mary**, it must have appeared very unkind and forgetful in me; but think how young I was when we were parted. And such strange things have happened to me, and I have known so many changes; and who or what I am has never been made certain to me up to this very day."

"Oh, dear, dear, miss, who can tell what wickedness all this while has been doing? When I got your papa's orders to put you into the hands of that Mrs. Roberts, and saw what a horrible woman she was, I declare I was quite wretched. What it meant I didn't know then, and I do not know now. Your papa afterwards assured me that that brute of a woman with the red face had not got the charge of you, after all. Else, I declare I would have gone myself, and taken you out of her hands—I would; and they might have hanged me for it, if they liked."

Eva comforted Mary with the assurance that the Mrs. Roberts (falsely so called) had had but a minor influence over her happiness, and had, in effect, been the author of great good fortune to her.

"I fear, Mary," she said, "you have often made yourself very unhappy about me. I wish you could have known how well I fared. I found kind friends; I was brought up in every comfort, and I now think it will be all my own fault, if I have not a very happy life."

"I bless God for my being allowed to hear it, my dear Miss Campion." They were standing together in the building. "But I fear you haven't had the bringing-up you had a right to have. You haven't been brought up by your rightful parents, I'm afraid."

"No, indeed. The only great unhappiness I have ever had is in not knowing who my rightful parents are."

"Can it really be? But, dear miss, do you not remember for yourself. I called you by your own proper name just now, and I thought it was not strange to you."

"The name is not strange to me. I was brought to believe, a little while ago, that I had been palmed on Mr. and Mrs. Campion as their own child;—or rather that Mrs. Campion had falsely

represented me to be her daughter. But I think I may feel assured that *that* disgrace does not attach to me.”

“You may feel assured that you are Mrs. Campion’s daughter, and no other,” said Mary, her excitement prompting her to speak more loudly than before; “and you may feel sure that you ought to be living in this house, and inherit it when your father dies; and so, I make bold to say, you *shall*. I remembered you, from the very moment you came the other day, and I contrived to look at the mark which I knew I should find on your arm. And I told my mistress all I knew, and all I thought; we planned coming here to-day; because that black figure used to stand in your dear mamma’s drawing-room, and you were always so fond of looking at it, when you were a little thing; and when all those dreadful things came to pass, it was sent here from Brighton; and as your papa couldn’t bear to look at it when he came—it reminded him of your mamma—the thing was put here; and here it has remained, and I knew it would bring the old time back to your thoughts, to see it.”

“Yes, indeed; it seems to bring back a hundred things. But how did it all happen? How came my parents to cast me off; and to part asunder, one from another?”

“Ah, Miss; that is, indeed, a thing which it would be a great matter to know. I could never tell. Only I am very sure that some very wicked work has been going forward. There is somebody, not very far from where we now are, whom I suspect of acting a most wicked part; although it is not very easy to say how. But I’ll tell you—as you may not remember, miss,—how it all happened.”

“Yes, pray do. Were we not living at the sea-side?”

“Yes, Miss, at Brighton. I was not with your mamma, when you were born; but you were born, they told me, at Fulham. At the time I speak of, and, indeed, all the time I was with you,—we were at Brighton. It was—let me see—it was the year ’42; and it was just about the beginning of March. Your papa was expected home, to stay in England altogether, and your mamma was happy indeed. I remember her saying that Mr. Campion would be home for her little Teresa’s birthday—which was the 14th of the month. She and you were in mourning; for your grandpapa, to whom all this belonged, was dead, and it had all become your papa’s. A few days before he really did come to Brighton, your uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald, who live here now,—they came down. One day, I had been taking you out for a walk, and when we came in, I was told that your papa was come at last. You had got yourself a little dirty with the seaweed, and I wanted your papa to see you at your very best, so I

went with you into the nursery, and then, in a very few minutes, we were going down into the drawing-room. And then—oh, it gave me such a turn, like, as I never knew in all my life. . Mrs. Gerald, that was your aunt, you know, who lives here now,—she met us at the door, and said, ‘You must take that child back into the nursery—she can’t come here now.’ I took you back, of course; though I felt very angry. And then I thought perhaps your mamma had only had a fainting-fit, or some such thing. Later on in the day, I heard that she was dreadfully ill, and likely to go out of her mind. Yet still I might have thought it was all her great joy at seeing your papa home again which had done it, only—and it made me wonder more and more—your papa never asked for you, nor came up-stairs to see you, all the whole of that day; And, indeed, he didn’t stay the night, nor come there all the next day. A few days after, he sent to say that if you were asleep, he would come, but didn’t wish for you to see him. You know, Miss, you were scarcely three years old then, though, indeed, you looked a good deal over; and you generally slept in the middle of the day. Your papa came in, and oh! he did look miserable, to be sure. But I was so angry at him for neglecting you since his coming home, that I didn’t think so much what had afflicted him. He looked at you a long while, and I saw him cry. It wasn’t my place to make remarks, so I was forced to be silent. Then he turned to me, and said—‘Mary, I understand you to be a faithful servant, and fond of this poor child’—and he told me what he wished me to do. I was to go away with you to some respectable lodgings in or near London, which he would find for me, and I was to keep you there for two or three weeks, and then to leave you in charge of a person whom he would point out to me. Well, Miss, I declare my answer was that I would do no such thing. You might think your papa was very angry; but he was nothing of the kind. He said, ‘Mary, I respect you for your feelings towards this poor child. Indeed, she wants all the kindness you can give her, for she is very unfortunate. But what I say must be done;—be done—if not by you, by some one else; and I really beseech you to do it.’ So, Miss, it was plain I should do no good by refusing, and might do some good by consenting; so I said I would do it. We went to some nice lodgings in Hornsey, and, just about the end of March—it was on Easter Tuesday, I recollect—I was told to take you to a Mrs. Roberts, near Euston Square. It was dreadful to me, to see what sort of a woman it was who called herself Mrs. Roberts. I left you in the house, when she was away; for I couldn’t have trusted myself to do so in her presence. But I afterwards heard from your papa, that you were to have a much better home than hers; and very much relieved I was. But I’d have given the world to know—I’d give the world to know

now—why you were not to have your proper home, with your own parents; and I say again, that I think Mrs. Gerald is somehow the contriver of it all; and it may be her bad conscience which keeps her shut up as she is."

At this moment the gardener came, to tell his sister that the time fixed by them for remaining had run out by several minutes. So they quitted the observatory, after giving a casual look at the telescope, which, of course, at that hour, had no news from the stars to convey. It was to play a certain part in earthly matters, and was to influence for Eva that future which, though mighty to bring far things near, it could not make any clearer to her.

As she stepped out of the observatory, she said to Mary, "I shall have my rights, I am well assured, Mary; and it is for this that I have been brought here now."

"Yes, Miss; whatever your papa might do, he couldn't (so I am told) take from you the right to all this."

And now the gardener joined them again, and they had no more talk on this subject. They quitted the grounds by the way they had come; and Eva and Mary were left to walk by themselves towards the gate in the wood. Before they reached it, they were accosted by somebody emerging out of the wood from a byepath—and that somebody was Miss Varnish herself.

She held out a hand to Eva, who, in a generous reaction against the unjustified dislike of Mrs. Torryng, accepted it quite cordially.

"Let me waive all ceremony, and introduce myself," said the governess, whose office was now in abeyance; "I have been longing to know you since I saw you on Saturday with dear Mrs. Torryng. How you must enjoy living with her! So much dry humour, and yet such perfect good nature! It's a way with her always to abuse you to your face, even when she likes you very much."

"She does not abuse me to my face," Eva said.

"She doesn't? Well, you *are* a favoured individual! Oh—

“ That I have seen,” said Eva.

“ Dear me ! You *have* seen it ? Well, now I will wish you good bye. I mustn't be answerable to Mrs. Torring^g for detaining you. My very kindest love to her. *Good bye !* ”

And Miss Varnish walked back towards the house. The bypath in the wood led towards a door in the garden-wall, and by that door (just as they reached the road) Eva and Mary heard her 're-enter the garden. The momentary thought crossed Eva, Why did the door, in closing, resound with such a clang ? There was little or no wind, and if Miss Varnish had shut it under the impulse of a violent anger, that anger must have been but of a few seconds' growth. Her temper, during their interview, had been superlatively sweet. But Eva had other and far greater things on which to think and talk, as they drove home ; and what matters occupied her mind for many days to come, you may conjecture, without any telling at all.

On the Wednesday her thoughts were, for a little while, diverted by a letter from Mr. Dowlas. He had been made aware of the error which had caused him to regard her as his niece-in-law, and likewise of the property which Mr. Leyburn had been content to assign him. He wrote to assure Miss March of his entire persuasion that, in all which had gone before, she had acted with the best intentions. He also said that he was more than satisfied with the wealth which had, in this roundabout way, come into his own possession ; and that he trusted she would permit him, though with no such title as before, to retain an interest in her still. He also told Eva that he had performed the duty of breaking the truth to poor Mrs. Roberts. She now knew that she was childless, without hope in this world ; and must look to the future life to give her back the forfeited joy. “ I trust,” wrote Mr. Dowlas, “ that she rests in the persuasion that her infant abides under surer protection than her own. My wife is well, and in good spirits. My children the same. Winifred asks after you very often.”

Very quietly went on the days at Chelford ; and Eva half regretted her anxious wish to disperse the mystery which hung about her still. We need not say that all which Mary could tell her was faithfully recorded to the Ballows, and by them transmitted to Mr. Dykhart.

Eva thought she could almost reconcile herself to remain in perfect quiet at Chelford until the coming January. In quiet, for a while, she was to continue there ; but not quietly, nor without disturbance, dismay, and mortal danger, was this passage in her life to come to an end.

CHAPTER XVI.

ONE MOONLIGHT NIGHT.

ON Thursday, the 18th of September, Mr. Murphy M'Quantigan, more exultant and hopeful than at any former period of his life, was seated over an early breakfast at his hotel. The night before, he had stumbled on a Welsh newspaper, some three weeks old, and had read in it the following paragraph:—

"THE LATE MR. GRYFFYTH, OF TREMALLYOC.—The estates of this deceased gentleman have been disposed of, we are given to understand, in a very singular and unexpected manner. With some insignificant exceptions, the whole of them have been devised to a young lady connected with the testator by affinity, though not by blood, and nearly related to a reverend gentleman who lives not a hundred miles from Llynbwllyn. Report says that this favoured young lady is yet more distinguished for her beauty and accomplishments than for the wealth which has thus unexpectedly fallen to her lot. It is whispered that Tremallyoc House, so lately the scene of a funeral, will, by-a-bye, be enlivened by a wedding; but, from motives of delicacy, we abstain from touching upon this. Report assigns to the fortunate heiress a somewhat chequered and romantic life in her girlhood. We trust she may have before her a long and happy career in the time to come."

Of course, Mr. M'Quantigan had no difficulty whatever in identifying the heroine of this paragraph with the girl whom he still sincerely believed to be his own daughter. Now, even should the matrimonial cup, which he thought Mrs. Ferrier was holding to his lip, sustain any slip; in his daughter's wealth he had a resource which would never run dry. The less Eva liked him, the more anxious she must be to keep him out of sight; and—for it came to the same thing—the more she would be ready to pay him to keep away. He had begun to wonder that no answer of any kind had been given to his letter, written just one week before. In that letter he had requested no more than ten pounds; now, of course, it would be beggarly in his daughter to offer, or in himself to mention, any sum falling short of a hundred. Only that Mrs. Ferrier had intimated a promise that she would satisfy the claims of his hotel, Mr. M'Quantigan would have felt a great deal more uneasy as day after day went by, and brought neither the letter of submission, which was to satisfy Mrs. Ferrier, nor the bank-note, which was to gratify himself. The news on which he had lighted in the *Cambrian Conservative* might explain the delay. Eva had other things to think of, but that she could slip out of her papa's fingers was now less likely than ever. Her very wealth would make her so far his prisoner. He did not intend to be hard

upon her. He would not mar her excellent chances. But she, on her side, must not be hard upon him. She must allow him what would make him quite independent of all that Mrs. Ferrier could do for him. Besides—and this was his second thought—would it not be as well to hesitate before—for better or worse—he gave his valuable self to Mrs. Ferrier? She was somewhat old. She was not very rich, and, for aught he knew, she might have some oddities of temper about her. She certainly looked, when they had talked about Eva the other day, like one capable of disliking very strongly. She was not quite one of those women who, possessed by an inordinate passion, allow it to quench all else besides in them. There was much more pride about her than, in a woman capable of inviting a man's addresses, could have been considered possible. She might prove thoroughly capable of guarding her pecuniary independence. She might insist on holding the purse as long as she lived, and her death (for aught he knew) might leave him as poor as ever. So this affair, which had looked so promising but a few days ago, grew quite a dull concern in the much more brilliant prospect opened by the imaginary wealth of his supposed daughter. Indeed, our friend was really half-inclined to take his pen in hand, and write to poor Mrs. Ferrier in some such words as these:—
 "Madam, — I've considered about it, and it won't do; and I should therefore advise you not to think any more about it." But while the words lay yet unwritten in his brain, the post of the morning came in, and a couple of letters were presently lying on his table. The handwriting of one he knew very well. It was a letter from Miss Varnish. By whom the other letter was written he had no idea. It looked like a lawyer's, but the Carnarvon postmark bespoke his eager interest in it. He opened it and read thus:—

"Tremallyoc, near Carnarvon, 17th Sept., 1856.

"SIR,—I am commissioned by my client, Miss Roberts, to answer your letter of the 10th, which was forwarded to her at her present abode, in a distant part of the country. The purport of my writing at this time is to assure you, on her behalf, that she very greatly regrets having been the innocent means of leading you into a very serious mistake. She has now been for some time fully aware that she is no way connected either with Mrs. Roberts or yourself. For certain reasons, most highly creditable to her heart and head, she felt constrained to keep her discovery for a short time secret. To convince you that she is not now seeking to evade any duty by a despicable subterfuge, I may inform you that the large property left her—as you may be aware—as the daughter of Susanna Roberts, has been surrendered into the hands of the heir-at-law, the evidence leaving no manner of doubt that your daughter, by Mrs. Roberts, really died in her early infancy. Miss Roberts desires me to say that she is sure you

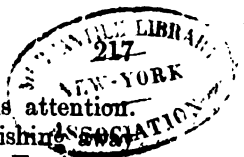
will see the propriety of not attempting any further communication with her. She also begs me to tell you that she will observe the most perfect silence as to any family matters which may have come to her knowledge during her residence at Llynbwlynn. Your letter contained a request for a small sum of money. On your engaging not to renew this request, or in any other way, to interfere with Miss Roberts, ten pounds shall be sent to any address you may name. Should you think fit to demand proof of a story in which you certainly have a right to feel interested, I shall be ready to afford it in the most satisfactory manner.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"L. LEWIS."

The feelings with which Mr. Murphy M'Quantigan read the foregoing may be well conceived, and the language in which those feelings found vent must certainly not be described. He could not doubt that it was all quite true. Indeed, he had wondered himself how Eva had obtained an education so utterly above her position as the daughter of poor Susanna. But he felt desperately angry at what he considered a wanton imposition. He now recollected being struck with a certain circumstance in the conduct of Eva.

It will be remembered by our readers that Miss March had held two interviews with the Irishman; and the discovery that he was not her father had occurred after the former, but before the latter. Hence the miserable shame which had overpowered her while thinking herself this wretched man's daughter had given place (at their second meeting) to a somewhat haughty independence. How her pity for poor Mrs. Roberts had kept her from taking a full advantage of the happy discovery, we also know very well. Eva's change of manner was too conspicuous to rest unnoticed by the sufficiently shrewd M'Quantigan; and more than once he had asked himself whether there might not have been some special cause for it. Now, rightly enough, he read that cause in the Welsh lawyer's disclosure to him. Between their first and second meeting the girl had found out that she owed him no duty at all. But he guessed not so rightly when he went on to consider her motives for keeping up the illusion. He could not fancy but that some evil purpose must have actuated her. This is one of the ways in which the wickedly wise are taken in their own craftiness. They are so slow to suspect the existence of *good* motives, that many a time they leave out of their calculations a very large element of human behaviour. But, ready as Miss March's disproved father might be to condemn her, it was not so easy to fix aught upon her. Only he felt that he had a lasting grudge against that young lady, of whom the Welsh lawyer, the better to guard her against further aggression, had spoken as though she still bore her discarded name of Roberts.



But all this while his second letter was awaiting his attention. So comforting himself with the thought that the vanishing of "Miss Roberts" must smooth his course with Mrs. Ferrier, he opened the letter, which was written by Miss Varnish. Of what he found therein it is likely that you have already a better idea than he had. But it was plain enough when read:—

"Deverington Hall, Bridgewater, September 16th, 1856.

"MY DEAREST MURPHY,—I write to you in the greatest trouble and misery. But a week ago, I was able to tell you how secure and comfortable a position I had got—or, rather, was going, before long, to get; and now a dreadful thing has happened, which may overturn all my hopes, in overturning the fortunes of those on whom those hopes depend. I must tell you what it is; because I apply to you (and I really feel I have a right to do so), to find out some way of preventing so much mischief. I do not know if I have ever spoken to you of an old woman at Chelford—(old *lady*, I suppose, many would call her, but I *don't*)—an old—(any bad name which may occur to you)—of the name of Torring. She is an old friend of Mrs. Campion's; and before the latter took to her queer way of avoiding everybody, I understand that there was a good deal of intimacy between them. Well, only last Saturday, I had been making some purchases in Chelford, and I was being driven home (you see, I have the use of the carriage already), when I met this hateful old witch, out walking. She looked at me, just as if she thought me some bad character (disgusting old thing!), and stopped to favour me with some of her customary impertinence. I noticed that she had a companion with her; a rather nice-looking girl (if she had not been so vulgarly stout): Mrs. Torring told me that she was a young lady from Wales; and one 'shortly to be married.' Of course, there was nothing in this to make the girl an object of any peculiar interest; and, but for what I am now going to tell you, I might, by this time, have forgotten that I had ever seen her. On Monday—that is, yesterday—I happened to hear from the gardener, that the young lady now living with Mrs. Torring was coming with Mrs. T.'s servant (who, by the way, happens to be the gardener's sister), to see the observatory and the gardens here. You will wonder what there was in this to rouse any great curiosity in me. But you will *not* wonder that my very peculiar and critical position at the Hall makes me alive to all sorts of dangers, and very vigilant over every person who might possibly be instrumental in scheming against me, and I really thought the gardener's manner betokened that the little excursion involved some secondary scheme. Old Mrs. Torring has the utmost spite against me; and the coming here of a person under her influence was likely to forebode no good. In self-defence, therefore, I was behind the observatory when the young girl and the servant came there. Verily and indeed, I had not been suspicious without a cause. Think of my astonishment, and horror even, when I heard the woman address Miss March (that was the name which Mrs. Torring had given her) as *Miss Campion!* And I soon learned, from broken speeches which reached my ears

that this young lady was about to assume, or to have thrust on her, the character of Mr. Campion's *elder* brother's daughter; and I know very well that the existence of such a personage would shut out *my* Mr. Campion from all rightful succession to the estate. I will not suppose that this girl's pretensions are real and truthful. But I have told you before, that there is a family secret, which I have endeavoured (and hitherto quite vainly) to make my own, and I should think that the secret, whatever it may be, has been taken hold of by these people, and is going to be made the vehicle of some atrocious conspiracy. Unfortunately, I could not catch but a very little of what was said between the two. To have come within distinct hearing would have been to betray my presence to them. But, I did hear the woman—'Patterson,' her name is—very confidently tell the girl she called 'Miss Campion,' that she would soon have her full rights—those modest rights including a recognition as the elder brother's daughter—and *heiress*; and if this wicked conspiracy should succeed, the splendid chance which I considered mine, is gone, and I were a fool indeed, if I thought that any like it would ever come again. You, Murphy, are the only person of whom I can think as likely to help, or to advise me. I want you to say, whether it would be well to meet this wicked imposture by some endeavour to detect and defeat it; or whether it would be safer to leave it to detect itself. Mr. Campion is much too particular—that is, I mean, much too irresolute for me to expect energetic action from him, deeply as all his interests are involved in the matter. He would, most likely, by some blundering concessions, enable these plotters to strengthen their absurd story very materially. You know, dearest Murphy, *you owe me something*. If this family are impoverished and ruined by any pretended discovery, why, it is for no good, after all, that I have obtained this situation here, in exchange for that which, *on your account*, I forfeited. And you must feel that you yourself are more likely to benefit by the success, than by the failure, of my own expectations. You may be able to discover something as to this Miss March (whom Mrs. Torring has evidently taken into her house, to ruin *me*), which may justify us all in rejecting her as a female Perkin Warbeck. Mrs. Torring said—what is more likely to be a lie than not—that the girl came from Wales. I may repeat to you, that she is passably good-looking, but for her being so stout. Her age one would think to be nineteen or twenty. Now, write me a comforting letter, dearest Murphy, and promise that you will aid me with advice in this. You have not found me backward in making sacrifices for *your* sake.

"Believe me,

"Dearest Murphy,

"Yours in much distress;

"EMMA VARNISH."

It would not have mitigated the "much distress" of the writer, could she have seen how her letter was treated, as soon as it had been thoroughly read. M'Quantigan dashed it angrily and contemptuously on the table. "What the —— devil does she think

that I can do about this Miss March,—April, May, or whatever her name is? Comes out of Wales? I think the Welsh were made to plague my life out altogether! Every troublesome being comes out of Wales! That Eva—for instance; I can't think of that Miss March, at any rate, until the other matter is disposed of.” So he crumpled Miss Varnish's letter in his pocket, another time would serve for attending to that, and once again turned his thoughts to that letter of the Welsh lawyer, and to its expected bearing on the affair with Mrs. Ferrier.

The confident tone in which it had been penned, at first persuaded him that it contained no falsehood. Still, he now thought it might be untrue. Eva, enriched by Mr. Gryffyth's bequest, had stronger reasons than ever for keeping at a distance her doubtful father. Again, if she were not indeed his daughter—what had brought to pass the strange mistake, or deception, under which, for a while, she had certainly appeared as the child of the unhappy Susanna? That was a wonder which required accounting for; and, upon the whole, it seemed more likely that she should repudiate such a parentage, when it rightfully attached to her, than that she should ever have acknowledged it, when it was not according to fact. There was much to make the former deception expedient; there was no conceivable thing to recommend the latter—unless indeed, the anticipated heirship to Mr. Gryffyth might have constituted the mainspring of all.

The lawyer's letter was not silent upon that inheritance. It told how, the mistaken identity being acknowledged, the property bequeathed had been surrendered into the hands of its rightful owner. Now, the truth or falsehood of this statement would put to the test the truth or falsehood of the other thing.

Mr. M'Quantigan decided that he would ascertain, by a personal visit, if no other way would serve him, whether such a surrender of property had really been made. If it had, there was then no doubt that Eva, whoever she might be, was not the daughter of poor Susanna Roberts. So Mr. M'Quantigan, not caring to take a journey into Wales, if he could avoid it, wrote a line to his friend at Bangor, who had organised that meeting at which Eva and Mrs. Roberts had attended; and asked him to inquire as to the present position and expected destination of the property of the late Mr. Griffyth, of Tremallyoc.

By the time he had written this note, the hour was come at which he had appointed again to call on Mrs. Ferrier. Now that his dream of possessing a rich daughter had all but melted away, the chance of having a rich wife was less than ever to be despised. He could now assure her that in taking him there would be no obnoxious daughter to take along with him. At the same time,

he decided that he would not be more candid with her than was needful. If they made up matters finally that day, the dreaded step-daughter might be a useful bugbear hereafter, in case Mrs. M'Quantigan (late Ferrier) should grow refractory on money matters, or prove otherwise submissive to the conjugal yoke. Besides, Mr. Murphy had not practised lying for so many years without knowing that the less he said the likelier he was to be believed. So he went to Rosebery Villas, prepared to tell as much or as little as had newly come to his knowledge as the progress of circumstances might seem to recommend.

Mrs. Ferrier was seated in her drawing-room, working in worsted, as we have seen her before. She was really very anxious to see the Irishman again; and when he came in, he was glad to find her as eager as behoved a love-sick lady of fifty-two.

"Well, Mr. Quantigan; pray sit down. I have thought you so long in calling again. It is—it is such a trouble to me when several days go by and I don't see you. You know—you know how greatly I rely on you, and what an important trust I am placing in your hands."

"My dear lady, if the time were my own, it's few would be the minutes I'd ever be away from you, and it's never sorry you shall be for trusting to me. So, then, you say you may put your happiness in my hands?"

"Indeed, I may say as much, Mr. M'Quantigan. It is my happiness—it is my life, which I am now confiding to you! Then let me ask if you have heard anything more of Miss Roberts?"

"My dear, good, lovely lady, you needn't fear her any more. I bring you to-day a positive assurance that she has cut off all chance of interfering with you, by her own act, by her own hand."

"Do you really say so? Oh, Mr. M'Quantigan! if, indeed, you are not mistaken, you make me the very happiest of women! I ought to be devoted to you all my life: I will be devoted to you all my life! for I shall always look on you as the greatest comforter that was ever sent to me in all my life!"

It may be considered that Mr. M'Quantigan was rather rash in at once proceeding with this love-affair (as his imagination had made it). But let full justice be done him. Whatever might pass between him and Mrs. Ferrier that day, he could stop short of marrying her, in case there was a chance of extorting an income from Eva, after all. To her protestations of life-long devotion he made a suitable reply—

"Bless you, sweet lady! And have no fear about Miss Roberts. Sure, I know what it is your'e afraid of. You don't want ever to be saddled with her as your daughter."

"That is the truth, indeed; that is the plain state of the case,

Mr. M'Quantigan. Some one has told you, I see. You—you will not wonder that I rather felt a delicacy in saying so myself.”

“Ah, you dear, delicate creature! And how long have I to wait for that blesseddest of blessed days,—my wedding-day?”

“Well, Mr. M'Quantigan, if it all depends upon me, all I can do shall be done to hasten the day. I suppose it is partly a question of money; and, as I said before, I have a little ready money, and the greater part of it (bound to you as I am), I shall have the utmost pleasure in placing at your disposal, to hasten the day so much desired by you.”

“Oh, give it me at once! Give it me at once, and I'll adore you all my life!”

“There shall be as little delay as possible, indeed, Mr. Quantigan. But you must not express yourself in quite such warm language. Only think what Miss Roberts would say, if she heard you!”

“Much I should care, indeed, for her saying!”

“Oh! now, Mr. M'Quantigan, for shame! I shall begin to suspect your constancy, and fear that you won't make a very kind husband. Poor Miss Roberts! To you, at all events, she seems devoted in her heart.”

“Divil a bit! She has gone and shaken me off; and it's not me that'll have aught to do with her again—anyhow!”

“Oh, Mr. M'Quantigan! What do you mean? You quite amaze me! Is this consistent with what you told me just now?”

“Sure it is!—and why not? I say this Miss Roberts shan't be any more in our way, at all!”

“Not, perhaps, in *your* way. But she is all the more likely, on that very account, to be most fearfully in *my* way.”

“Why, my blessed lady, won't our two ways be soon all the same?”

“I don't altogether see that, Mr. M'Quantigan, I must say. But you agitate me more than I can well describe. Do, I beg of you, consider my feelings, and be more explicit. You spoke, just now, as if you were to be married without delay. I do beseech you, state your real intentions in so many words.”

Thus challenged, the Irishman dropped upon his knees, and clasped Mrs. Ferrier's gown.

“Then here I lie, adorable creature, whose Christian name I have not the good fortune to know; here I lie, a miserable suppliant at your feet, until you say with your very own lips, ‘I love you, and you may get up.’”

“Mr. M'Quantigan! Come now, really! I don't want to find fault,—but you are really carrying a joke too far. You must not, indeed!”

He interpreted this remonstrance as implying that, instead of

asking for encouragement on her side, he ought to consider it as already given, so he got up again on his feet, as quickly as he had just gone down upon his knees.

"Then it's just this, dear old girl! Give me the money for the ring and the license, and I'll meet you in church any day you'll choose to name. Give me the money and a kiss."

"Sir! Mr. M'Quantigan! Gracious!"

"Won't you really give me a kiss! I'll tell you why you won't. It's just because you want me to take one for myself—that's it."

And, taken the kiss would have been, only Mrs. Ferrier, now frightened as well as astounded, darted back to the French window that opened into her garden. Another moment, and she would have opened it, and escaped out of the room. But no such necessity, after all, was laid upon her. Mr. M'Quantigan—at all events on this occasion—had his feelings under very perfect control. And he now perceived either that he had made some strange mistake from the first, or that the lady, capricious beyond all reason, had found some fatal flaw in himself. For one or two minutes there they stood, mutually bewildered and astonished—she with her hand upon the window, he in the middle of the room—a *tableau* that, exhibited on any stage, would have drawn crowd upon crowd, to wonder and to laugh, right on for a century of nights.

"I really—really, if you do not act more reasonably, must call out for assistance, Mr. M'Quantigan."

"Me act more reasonably!" replied the gentleman; in a tone that savoured much more of the husband than of the lover;—"it's you that would do well to be a little more reasonable, madam. Do you call it a reasonable thing to encourage a man one minute, and then run screaming away from him the next?"

"Encourage! I don't know what you would say, Mr. M'Quantigan. If you mean that I gave you any encouragement to address me, as you di djust now, it really is the most unfounded——"

Oh, now, you'll never deny that you said your objection to that Miss Roberts was, the having her for your daughter?"

I trust my son will not complete the folly he meditates, after all.”

M'Quantigan's wits were coming back to him by this time, and he was able to conceal a great part of his astonishment. How utterly mistaken he had been! And how warily he must behave, not to become inextricably entangled in falsehood.

Mrs. Ferrier spoke again, without waiting for an answer on his part.

“At least, Mr. M'Quantigan, I presume you will not deny that there was some serious engagement between Miss Roberts and yourself?”

Mr. M'Quantigan paused, as one about to throw a stake. It would surely be safest to confirm what Mrs. Ferrier already believed. If he denied it, she might pounce upon the real explanation of his brief acquaintance with Eva; and then she would wash her hands of him altogether. Otherwise, though he was not to be rewarded with herself, he might possibly make a very good thing of the connection, even now. So he answered:—

“Yes, Mrs. Ferrier; it is, indeed, true that there was something between us; but, as I said before, she has cast me off; she won't have any more to say to me.”

“Is it possible? Possible, indeed! Why should I ask? nothing she does ought in any way to surprise me.”

“Believe me, Mrs. Ferrier, the fault is every bit her own.”

“Oh, I don't, in the least degree, doubt that, Mr. M'Quantigan. I need no manner of assurance to convince me of that; and as far as you are concerned, I can only congratulate you on so fortunate an escape. But you misunderstood me most frightfully just now. I do hope you have not inadvertently named the matter to any one besides ourselves.

“Never, ma'am, upon my oath!” and it may be as well to say that, in saying this, he uttered no perjury. A few boastful hints he may have dropped now and then; but Mrs. Ferrier's name had never escaped him in any such association. “Never, ma'am, upon my oath!” he accordingly said; “and I'd gladly serve you now, in any way I could.

“Thank you, Mr. M'Quantigan! And I certainly gathered from you, that for Miss Roberts to throw you aside was the very last thing she was likely to do. At all events, I became more and more convinced what a wicked young woman she must be. And, though I find myself mistaken in the idea that she will ever become your wife, it would, indeed, be a shameful thing to desire that any honest man should take her; yet, so much having passed between you, it is possible that you may assist me in proving how unfit she is to be my son's wife. My son, I grieve to say, is so

blindly infatuated, that nothing, short of most positive proof will have any kind of influence with him."

"Mrs. Ferrier, believe me when I say that I hate the wicked creature, and that I'll help you all I can to expose her."

"I desire it only as a matter of duty, of strict duty, Mr. M'Quantigan. You shall see some papers, which contain this wretched girl's history, and then you'll see my reasons more clearly still."

"Mr. M'Quantigan felt a real curiosity to see the papers of which Mrs. Ferrier spoke; but it struck him that he had better not do so just now. They might contain a few facts of which it would be servicable, for the present, to affect ignorance. He had not yet irrevocably decided what he should do. Eva might be his daughter, after all; and—for the one included the other almost as a matter of course—she might be in assured possession of all Mr. Gryffyth's wealth; in which position, she, and not Mrs. Ferrier, was the person by whom to gain. Indeed, Mrs. Ferrier's heart would very likely soften in her favour, were she known to be a wealthy heiress; and she might become as anxious to promote, as now to prevent, the marriage of Miss Roberts with her son; and then, it would constitute no claim upon her gratitude, to have aided in hindering it. Eva's possible father had no fear, if she should prove rich and his daughter, but that he should obtain a share in her riches. It was not on her affection, but on her aversion, that his hopes depended. She would buy him out of her way; as a man buys up a noisy tavern, or an unsightly cottage, that spoils the quiet or the beauty of his gardens. But it was as well to dispose of that question before incurring the trouble, and possibly the danger, which might arise from any new revelations. So he begged Mrs. Ferrier to excuse him for that day, as he had an engagement awaiting him. On Saturday—or, at any rate, on Monday—he would ask to be indulged with a sight of those papers.

"Well, Mr. M'Quantigan, I am aware that your time must be most valuable to many others beside myself. Only let me say how very much I rely on you, and how gratefully, substantially grateful, you will be sure to find me."

"Believe me, I go devoted to your interests, above everybody else's, Mrs. Ferrier; though you send me away with an aching heart—indeed, you do."

"Hush, pray now, Mr. M'Quantigan. It's not that I would be wanting in respect to you; but I am come to that time of life when one should rest content with one's present condition."

"Well, well—forgive me, dear madam. You have no idea where Miss Roberts is at present? I have none."

"Not unless she be with her friends, the Ballows, at Minchley.

You might do well to inquire. But, if she is with them, possibly she may not go by the name of Miss Roberts. Indeed, I fancy she would find a change of name rather convenient at this time. Perhaps she goes by the name which, until lately, she always bore, Miss March.”

“Miss March!” and the bat which Mr. M’Quantigan had taken in his hand, fell out of it on to the floor. “Miss March! And do you say that this Miss Roberts ever went by the name of Miss March?”

“Yes, always; until, as you’ll see, when you look at those papers I spoke of, she was found out to be the daughter, the illegitimate daughter—the illegitimate daughter of a Welshman of the name of Roberts. Did you ever hear her spoken of?”

I cannot say! it struck me as if I had. I shall very likely be better able to tell you, when I see you again. Now, good bye, Mrs. Ferrier; and I’ll lose no time in satisfying you on this, and every other matter.

And he took his leave, and was gone. What an interview it had been! And by what a mere accident—it almost made him tremble to think—had the most important fact of all been given to his knowledge. The utter collapse of his matrimonial aspirations was already as a thing which had happened to him long ago; so much of stranger matter had superseded it. Could it verily be that “Miss March,” the subject of his Somersetshire friend’s profuse forebodings, was one and the same with that “Miss Roberts,” dread of whom appeared the animating principle of Mrs. Ferrier’s actions? Seated again in the coffee-room of his hotel, Mr. M’Quantigan drew out Miss Varnish’s letter with a much more respectful handling, than that with which he had crammed it in.

Of course, it did not escape *him* that Miss Varnish was paltering with truth when she expressed so firm a conviction that Eva’s pretensions to be a Campion were all deceitful ones. The writer was inwardly convinced that the claim would prove true, and was in agony of terror at the utter ruin which the acknowledgment of such rights would bring to her own expectations. The Irish friend of Miss Varnish felt sure already that there was some truth in Eva’s new pretensions. The contradictory mystery which overshadowed her might well have such an issue as that. However, he had already written to ascertain if there was any lingering chance of claiming Eva as his daughter. He must forthwith write, and get either substantiated or disproved the identity of Miss March with Miss Roberts. So he wrote off to Miss Varnish that day, informing her that he verily believed he could aid her—that is, could expose the futility of Miss March’s pretensions. Only, he required for that end a certain service at Miss Varnish’s own hands. Would she take the earliest possible opportunity of seeing

this young "pretender," and turn the conversation between them to *North Wales*, and carefully remember and record the places in that region with which Miss March declared herself familiar? M'Quantigan imposed this service on his old friend Emma with perfect confidence. He was well assured (and so he told her), that she had not committed herself to any open hostility with Mrs. Tarring's young friend. So he waited, very confident that he should quickly know whether, indeed, her enemy and Mrs. Ferrier's enemy were one person or two.

This day was Thursday, and let Miss Varnish be as prompt and as speedy as she might, an answer from her could hardly reach him until Monday. In fact, it did not come to him until the Tuesday. But his letter of inquiry as to the property in Wales was answered by the Saturday. It was the common talk at Tremallyoc (so M'Quantigan's Bangor friend wrote to tell him), and, indeed, throughout a very wide circle in Carnarvonshire, that Mr. Gryffyth's will had been executed under a very strange mistake; but that the innocent usurper, known as Miss Roberts, had appealed to the heir-at-law to rescue her out of her afflicting position; and that he, not behind her in an upright generosity, had arranged matters very justly and reasonably.

Having read this, M'Quantigan put aside, once and for good, any further idea of thrusting himself on Eva. He was quite disposed, on his own account, to become her enemy; and horrid purposes, which were to attain a fixed shape by-and-by, already floated indistinctly before him. It must be remembered that this man had not only been a criminal before the law; he came of a race by whom the sanctity of human life is held in little account. We do not speak of his being an Irishman, but of his being an Orangeman. [Since we began to write this story, some Liverpool Orangemen have shown their respect for the Decalogue by threatening the life of a bishop on Sunday !]

The blood of Mrs. Ferrier's new ally had run, for several generations, in the veins of men to whom the life of every Romanist was a little less sacred than that of a wolf. The brutal ascendancy

I contrived to meet her, as if by accident, that very day; and in quite an innocent manner, I mentioned the observatory. However, I talked about North Wales, as you desired; and she let fall that she had stayed a short time near Carnarvon; she mentioned a place which (to spell it as pronounced) is called ‘Thlinbuthlin,’ but which she was so obliging as to spell for me,—‘Double L, Y, N, B, double U, double L, Y, N.’ This I wrote down,—laughingly, of course—before her own eyes. She also mentioned a place called ‘Tremallyoc.’ I could see that there was a great deal respecting her adventures in those places, of which it did not suit her ladyship to speak. It might be well for you to go and inquire there. It should be no manner of expense to you. I suppose Miss March intends to keep her foolish pretensions to herself and the servant, until some opportunity offers; until, for instance, Mr. Herbert Campion comes home,—in about a month’s time. So, you see, we may find time to trip her up beforehand. It was good of you, dearest Murphy, to answer my letter so quickly, and to enter so warmly into my troubles. But I was sure you would. I shall never forget you, be my fate what it will,

“Yours ever affectionately,

“EMMA VARNISH.”

“P.S.—As you seem to have some idea that you know Miss March, I will briefly describe her to you. As I said before, she is somewhat stout. She has ‘golden brown’ hair; large (unpleasantly large) brown eyes; a really good complexion (fair), but with a great deal too much colour in her cheeks. She has a dashing boldness of manner that *some people* like.”

This letter fully established the identity which had appeared to Mr. M’Quantigan a likely thing, from the moment that Mrs. Ferrier had mentioned Eva under the name of Miss March. To Mrs. Ferrier, therefore, he at once betook himself, still keeping his resolution to tell her less or more of the truth, as the great principle of expediency might appear to dictate. He found her eager to see him as before, and this time he was under no delusion as to the cause of her eagerness. He did not purpose telling her that Eva was assuming kindred with the Campion family. If she heard of such claims, and were led to believe them, there would at once be an ending of her great objection to Eva as a daughter-in-law, and a consequent ending of any profit to be gained by him in preventing the marriage. Of course, the first question she asked him was, whether he could favour her with any news. His answer was, that he had discovered (after a great deal of trouble in inquiring, he said,) that Eva was living at Chelford, in Somersetshire, under her assumed name of Miss March, and (he also gathered) “up to her old tricks.”

“Indeed, Mr. M’Quantigan! Up to her old tricks? Leading foolish people to believe in her, and setting families at variance, I shouldn’t wonder?”

"Madam, that's just what I hear entirely. The friend and relation who writes to me, tells me that this Miss March has got into the house of an old lady, and is trying to wheedle her out of all her property,"

"Just what I should expect, Mr M'Quantigan! I grieve to say it,—just what I should expect. I think that old lady, whoever she is, ought to be cautioned at once."

"We must be careful how we act, my dear madam. That girl is more artful than you would ever believe."

"Believe! There's scarcely any wickedness that I should not believe of her, and I know, but too well, that she's just the most artful creature in existence."

And Mrs. Ferrier thought within herself, what a blessing it was that she had persuaded Richard to promise a certain delay in marrying. He would evade the promise, no doubt of it. He would find some quibble, whereby to escape. But it had prevented his taking Miss March to wife at once. He, probably, would defer the crowning folly until January; and before then this wicked young woman, unconscious, very likely, how closely she was watched, would get herself into some scrape, not to be forgiven by even the deluded Richard.

We may just observe that Mrs. Ferrier and her ally now always spoke of Eva as Miss March, thereby avoiding confusion.

"She's so artful," assented M'Quantigan to the lady's last remark, "that I feel sure and certain she must be nothing better than a Papist in disguise."

"Well, indeed, Mr. M'Quantigan! I wonder that idea never before struck me. Yes, certainly, I should really think she must be a female Jesuit."

"And ought we to be particular in dealing with such people as that, Mrs. Ferrier? Is it right to apply ordinary rules to our method of getting rid of such enemies to society?"

"I should think not, indeed, Mr. M'Quantigan. We must, when we have such wicked people to deal with, do many things which, in themselves, are very painful. Have you told me all that your correspondent tells you about this wretched, abandoned girl?"

"Pretty nearly, Mrs. Ferrier. I'm sorry I can't show you the letter. But it contains one or two little matters of business

poor old lady! I really don't feel easy when I think what that girl may be doing to her. Robbing her may not be the worst.”

“She just deserves to be hanged, Mrs. Ferrier.”

“Well, indeed, you're not far wrong, Mr. M'Quantigan. Oh, I would give myself to be hanged; I would be hanged over and over again, rather than my foolish son should marry this infamous creature.”

Mr. M'Quantigan waited a second or two; then looked at her very eagerly, and spoke slowly:—

“Then, Mrs. Ferrier; you really would do something, and risk something, to make this marriage that you dread impossible?”

“That I would, Mr. M'Quantigan. I beseech you, accept my assurance in the fullest and strongest sense. If you hesitate to do so,—I told you before I had a little money at my disposal; well, then, I will place £400 in your hands, and consider myself your debtor over and above for life, if you can contrive to make this marriage an *impossible one*.”

“It shall be done, Mrs. Ferrier! It shall all be done! You want to feel yourself safe in all the time to come, and not only for the present?”

“To be sure I do, Mr. M'Quantigan. I want to have matters so arranged that this marriage *cannot* be. I think it can be done, but only by an extreme course, and that extreme course, I think, we are justified in taking.”

“We are, my dear madam. But would you wish to know my plan when I have had time to settle upon it?”

“Why, I rather think no, Mr. M'Quantigan. I will leave it all in your hands, and shall only wish to be assured that you have fairly succeeded.”

Two possible ways occurred to her in which the gentleman might earn his £400 at her hands. He might pursue his old advantage with Miss March (as understood by her from Mrs. Dowlas's letter), and drive her into a marriage with himself, or he might establish a watch on her present proceedings, and find her out in some sort of wickedness which would overthrow her character beyond every chance of re-establishing it. Mrs. Ferrier thought that she should be furthering either scheme, rather by her ignorance than by her connivance.

“Then,” presently replied her Hibernian ally, “you'll never be changing your mind when the thing is done? You'll never be for finding fault, or complaining that I've gone too far for you?”

“Pray do not suspect me of any such ungrateful feelings, Mr. M'Quantigan. As I said before, I give up every other consideration to this one. And now, Mr. M'Quantigan, if you remember, I was to show you some papers connected with this wretched young

woman. You will see how she first became acquainted with our family, and what a very different return we deserved from her from that which she is actually making. And you'll also see how she came to find her real relations—those people in North Wales."

And Mrs. Ferrier opened her drawer, and took out her brother-in-law's famous narrative, and also a copy of the letter which Mr. Dowlas had written to her from Llynbwllyn. These documents she put into Mr. M'Quantigan's hands; and, with them, he returned to his temporary home.

They would have been much more interesting to him to read, only that he knew already how much of their contents had been founded on a serious mistake. The most interesting point was the singular occurrence of the name of Campion in the history. That circumstance might, indeed, have suggested to Eva the idea of claiming to be Mr. Campion's daughter. But she had given great proof of her sincerity in thus claiming. She had abandoned the ample fortune which was hers as the daughter of Susanna Roberts. Bitter enemy of Eva's, though he was, and strongly as his interests inclined him to injure her to the utmost, he did her justice in this respect. He believed that she was no impostor at all.

On the following day (Wednesday, the 24th), he wrote to Miss Varnish, as follows:—

"DEAR EMMA,—My great regard for you has led me to make inquiries about this Miss March, and now, to be very candid with you,—if you wish to protect yourself from her, you must be prepared for the strongest measures. You had better put away all thought of ridding yourself of her by convicting her of being an impostor. I have the very strongest reasons for believing, that if, indeed, she be not the other Mr. Campion's daughter, *she will succeed in making it appear so*. Now, my dear Emma, out of old friendship, I am willing to help you in this most serious difficulty; for, as you justly forebode, if these claims are once established, in all probability the elder brother will re-assume his position; and Deverington Hall, if it continue your home at all, will never have you for its mistress. Now, I will not suppose you such a fool, Emma, that you will allow a small scruple to bar you out of such very good prospects. I repeat, that I am

Of course, desirous as I am of securing my threatened prospects, I could not venture on any such perilous step as you seem to hint at. And you must be mocking me, to propose any such thing. If the story be true, as you really appear to believe, I must make up my mind to lead this wretched life of dependence, until I die. I sometimes wish that I had made up my mind to it from the very beginning. Perhaps, if I had given as much time and trouble to the fitting myself for a good situation, as I have to concealing my unfitness, I might have been happy and thriving in a humble way, and have had no secrets to burden me. This would have been a useful reflection to me ten years ago; but it can profit me little now. I must sink or swim, as the waters run, having drifted out of reach of the shore. It appears as if I must sink; for I cannot remain long with this family in my *present* capacity, and another comfortable situation it may be hard to find. So, thank you, dear Murphy, for your readiness to help me; but I dare not accept such help as you appear to propose.”

“Your still loving,

“EVA.”

Mr. Murphy was brought to a standstill by this letter. Much as Miss Varnish dreaded the idea of disappointment and poverty, she dreaded the thought of crime still more. It suited M'Quantigan to have her believe that, in her interests only was he ready to take measures against Miss March; and he began to consider, since those interests were not strong enough to overcome her scruples, whether any stronger influence could be brought to bear upon them. It was expedient that the crime, on which he had thoroughly determined, should be committed with Miss Varnish's assistance. She might act as a decoy to get Eva into the desirable situation; moreover, she might prove a most useful scapegoat, should after suspicions arise, to bear the weight of any accusation. He knew the heart of this woman. She loved him, and would hate any rival. Mrs. Ferrier had strangely imagined him to be the lover of Miss March. If Miss Varnish could be inoculated with the same idea, her languid jealousy of Eva might be stirred into a jealousy very different in its origin and kind. And this brought our Irishman to another matter; how had Mrs. Ferrier been led into that strange mistake of imagining that he had stood in such a relationship with Eva? He put the two things together, and began to see a way of compassing his evil end by taking them together. On Monday, the 29th of the month, he again visited Mrs. Ferrier, for the purpose of ascertaining who, or what, had inspired her with so mistaken a notion, and of following up a plan which will be shown in his own conversation.

Mrs. Ferrier, after some little pressing on his own side, put into his hand the letter she had received, almost a month before, from Mrs. Dowlas. That letter, as we know, alluded to Mr. M'Quantigan in terms not the most respectful. But Murphy was

only too thankful to the writer for having failed to identify him with Bryan O'Cullamore, well known by her in former days at Liverpool. He grinned to himself as he read the letter over "Now, bless your sweet disposition, my dear," he said internally, "that is sure to think the worst of everybody at all times,—I recognise the charitable heart of my good and dear sister Jane. Anybody less prompt at thinking evil would have pounced upon the truth. Thank you, my dear, for not doing so."

Then he returned the letter to Mrs. Ferrier. "I do assure you, ma'am," he said, "that if anything was not as it should be, Miss March, and not I, was in the wrong."

"That I believe, as a matter of course, Mr. M'Quantigan. But tell me—I am fearfully anxious to know—how are you getting on in the matter which I have so much at heart?"

"Why, to be candid with you, Mrs. Ferrier, not very well. I was telling you, the other day, that I had a friend near Chelford, who had seen Miss March. Perhaps you remember?"

"I am very little likely to forget, Mr. M'Quantigan; and I certainly remember very well."

"My friend, as I told you, had conceived a very bad opinion of the young woman. But—there's no setting bounds to her tricks—she has actually had the address to gain my friend—a good, but rather simple sort of lady—to gain her to her own side. And Miss Varnish, that is my esteemed friend's name, is quite persuaded that she has been mistaken; and, as amends for what she thinks to have been a foolish prejudice, is resolved to stand by her against all her enemies. And if anything were said or done against Miss March, this weak, well-meaning lady would be down upon everybody who had a hand in it. We are beaten, Mrs. Ferrier, hopelessly beaten; unless we can convince this good soul what a viper she is warming in her bosom."

Oh, dear! Oh, dear! There surely is some witchcraft in the girl! But I'll fight her to the utmost extremity, Mr. M'Quantigan; there surely must be a way of opening your friend's eyes."

"You can do it, Mrs. Ferrier. I doubt whether I could."

"I, rather than you? I, who am a stranger?"

"Yes, Mrs. Ferrier, and I will freely tell you what I mean. We have spoken already of—the transient influence which this deceiving young woman exercised over *me*. The matter is very freely and tersely spoken of in this letter, written by Mrs. Jane Dowlas. Now, it would be a somewhat delicate matter for me to speak of this; but you, if you would, might write and warn Miss Varnish against the friendship she seems to be making; and you might enclose Mrs. Dowlas's letter, to show that you do not speak out of your own head. The letter does, indeed, speak of the girl

as ‘Miss Roberts,’ but, with what my friend already knows, she will not find much difficulty in believing that they are one and the same.”

After one or two more discussions that day, Mrs. Ferrier agreed to do as she was counselled; and on the morrow it was done. Her own letter to Miss Varnish was very brief; it simply consisted in an assurance that Miss March and Miss Roberts were one and the same, and in a caution against the young woman, as sure to repay the purest kindness with the foulest ingratitude. M‘Quantigan, meantime, wrote also a very brief note to the same lady. He told her that, of course, it must be as she pleased; his desire of efficiently helping her continued the same. He was not greatly astonished when, on Friday, the 3rd of October, he got this letter from his Emma:—

“MY DEAR MURPHY,—You are very right, and I was a fool to have any such scruples. Let us get rid of her in any way we can; only let me know your wishes, and I will take any trouble and run any risk to forward them. I control myself, and keep good friends with her.

“Your,
“EMMA.”

This letter was answered by return of post. And one or two more letters passed between the correspondents in the course of the next week. But, instead of copying them here, we shall leave them to be discovered in the events which were now being hurried on by them.

On the afternoon of Saturday, the 11th of October, Mr. M‘Quantigan made another call on Mrs. Ferrier. It was the fifth of his memorable interviews with her. One interview more—strange, awful, and threatening, but more so to him than to her—were these two persons destined to have, and then they were to see one another no more.

“Mrs. Ferrier,” he now said, “I have made up my mind—feeling myself justified by the necessity—to start on my expedition to-morrow.”

“You go—where, Mr. M‘Quantigan?”

“I go, Mrs. Ferrier, into Somersetshire. I hope—to put a long ending to all your troubles.”

“Oh, I pray that you may be successful, Mr. M‘Quantigan!”

“Nor do I doubt that I shall. But I want to have a night in London. Or I am not sure”—and he lowered his voice—“whether it will be wise to go the most direct way.”

“Perhaps not. Well, I am prepared, over and above what I promised, to pay all the expenses of your journey.”

“Could you let me have twenty pounds at once?”

“Yes, if I have as much in the house. I will see.” The amount was found, and given to him. “And now, Mrs. Ferrier,

I've taken the liberty to ask my correspondents to send any of my letters, after to-day, to your house here; you don't object?"

"Not at all, Mr. M'Quantigan. I am only too glad to oblige you in any way."

"There's a friend of mine, just written a pamphlet exposing the Jesuits. You'd do me a favour, my dear madam, if you'd read and recommend it. It'll reach you, I shouldn't wonder, to-morrow, or Monday. It'll come, very likely, in a common envelope, addressed to *me*—*pray open it!* And now, good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Mr. M'Quantigan! and I trust, when we meet again, you will have to congratulate me."

"I shouldn't wonder. Or it may reach you through the papers beforehand. Good-bye!" and he was gone.

And now, for the very first time, it did occur to Mrs. Ferrier that she might have trusted this man too far. The idea did cross her, could he intend cutting the knot by any sort of crime? Then she reflected that it was a little absurd to transfer the ideas of another age and country to the secure and self-restrained society in which she lived and moved herself. Doubtless, if the Irishman talked as if violence were meditated, it was but his rough and downright way of putting matters. That wicked Miss March was vulnerable enough by moral weapons. There could be no reason for assailing her with any act which would put her enemies in the wrong. Mrs. Ferrier need not, and would not, vex herself with any such ridiculous fancies.

But the next day was to her an anxious and tiresome Sunday. A certain dread of being alone crept over her; and in the afternoon she took a fly, and drove to call on an invalid friend at Warwick, proposing to remain for the night in that friend's house; and her company was gladly and readily accepted. It was drawing towards the evening of the following day (Monday) when she got back to her house at Leamington. On her table was lying a letter addressed to Mr. M'Quantigan. But the transparency of the envelope displayed some printed characters inside. It was surely the pamphlet which Mr. Murphy had told her to expect, and which he had so earnestly asked her to read. She had not much desire to read it; but anything was welcome which could afford some diversion to her thoughts. So she at once tore open the envelope, and got at the contents of it.

There was no such thing as a pamphlet. The printed paper appeared as if cut out of a newspaper. On the side she first saw were several fragmentary advertisements. She turned it round, and read on the reverse. It entirely consisted of one paragraph, and these were the words:—

"FATAL ACCIDENT FROM CHLOROFORM.—On Monday last, an inquest

was held at the “Three Screws” Tavern, in Camden Town, on the body of a young woman, of the name of Mary Smith. It appears that the unfortunate deceased suffered frequently from neuralgia; and that she was in the habit of seeking relief from chloroform. On the fatal night she seemingly imbibed an overdose of the dangerous preparation, and thereby met her untimely death. An open bottle of chloroform was found beside her bed. The medical man in attendance deposed that any quantity of this anæsthetic, beyond a limited amount, would infallibly kill the inhaler of it. Verdict—Accidental Death.”

With feelings she never could have analysed up to her dying day, Mrs. Ferrier took hold of the letter, which the envelope had also contained; for a letter, though not a long one, it proved to be. Thus was it written:—

“DEAREST MURPHY,—I think there will be time for you to receive this before you start from Leamington. I send you a very comforting and encouraging extract, which has caught my eye in a newspaper. It proves the wisdom of the means devised by us. Rely on my having all ready. To make all sure, I will just recapitulate the directions already given. Stop, on your way from Bridgewater, *before* you come to the great gates of D—— Hall, at a gate in the wood. Enter inside (it is never locked); turn into a by-path—first turning on the right; that will take you to a door in a wall, which will happen to be unlocked. Go into the garden, turn to the right, and you will find yourself in front of the house. Enter by a glass door, at which you will see a light; go through a vestibule, up a pair of stairs, and the very first door (on the left hand) will be *the* door. *She* will certainly come here on Monday. Perhaps it will be as well for me *not* to see you.

“Your’s

“E.”

And now there burst upon Mrs. Ferrier’s mind, in all its appalling certainty, the knowledge that a great and dreadful crime was on the very brink of its accomplishment, and that she stood in the position of instigator and first contriver of it.

Eva was to be murdered—murdered that very night, in a way which would make it appear that she had died by her own incaution. Fearful, in that moment, were the thoughts of Eva’s unrelenting, but not designedly cruel enemy. And her thoughts—when first she awoke from the black stupor into which that awful letter had cast her—her thoughts took shape in the conviction not to be resisted by her: “A few hours will make me a murderer!”

Yes, indeed; no way of escape appeared. The shadow of that night, in which the horrid deed was to be done, was descending on the earth already; and the murderers and their victim were very far away. Murderers! But how could she exempt herself from the fearful title? True it was, she had never desired, never intended, a crime like this. In her utmost anger against Eva, such an idea had never crossed her brain for one instant. But she could

not, on that plea, account herself excusable now. On parting with M'Quantigan two days before, it had struck her that he talked like one who had some lawless enterprise in hand. Now, she only marvelled that his whole design had not been patent to her thoughts at once. It ought to have been, and it would have been, but that her one idea had driven her beyond the bounds of justice and reason. She had given an evil spirit dominion over her; and it was going to cast her down into an abyss of blood. Would anybody, knowing how all had happened, account her scatheless of the murder? Could she venture to declare as much of herself? What knowledge had she of this Irishman, that she should have given him a confidence hardly to be exceeded if he had indeed been her husband? Had he not given her ample warning? At all events, how deceitful and dangerous a character was his! Would any woman, unless carried away by passion, have treated with him after the ridiculous presumption with which her first advances had at first inspired him? Had she not outraged all womanly feeling? And could she plead any womanly honesty, as entitling her to claim acquittal from the awful charge which might shortly be brought against her?

She started to her feet. Was there anything now to be done? Could she, at this supreme moment, interfere? and, if so—how? Should she telegraph to Miss March, and warn her? Miss March, by this time, was probably a guest at that house in which the murder was to be done. And that house she only knew as "D—Hall." By the description of it in the letter, it was probably a place of some distinction; and any one living at Bridgewater, from which, apparently, it was not very distant, would guess at once, most likely, what was the house intended. Mrs. Ferrier turned to the postmark of the letter. Not Bridgewater, but Chelford was the name on the envelope. In fact, although Bridgewater was the proper post-town, Chelford was much nearer. And Miss Varnish, choosing to post this letter with her own hands, had chosen the town to which she was in the constant habit of going.

If Mrs. Ferrier could get to Bridgewater, she might find this Hall, which must lay between Bridgewater and Chelford, and prevent the crime which would brand her name with infamy, and her soul with guilt, through a stretch of uncounted ages. Could it be done? Great wonders of travelling were now to be done. She hastily rang the bell. The servant appeared.

The girl was not backward in obeying. Mrs. Ferrier went upstairs, and hastily assumed her cloak and bonnet, and popped all the money in her desk into her pocket. It was not much ; for Mr. M'Quantigan had taken twenty pounds from her when they parted on the Saturday. She was standing before the front door of her house, when Susan came running home.

“ Oh ! if you please, ma'am, I—ran all the way as hard as I could, but the—bank—was shut already—some time, the people said. It must have been—quite closed before you sent me, ma'am. Here is the—cheque, ma'am.”

“ What am I to do ? But give me the cheque ; some of the tradesmen may be able to let me have the money. Susan, good-bye ; you've been a good servant. Think as well of your wretched mistress as you can. You will very likely never see me again.”

And off Mrs. Ferrier hastened, leaving the girl, so lately breathless with exertion, now breathless again with astonishment. When her mistress had turned out of sight, she went indoors again, and told the cook she was dreadfully afraid poor mistress had gone out of her wits with all the worry she had had. And sure and certain, the almanack said that it was to be full moon that very day.

Meantime, the lady, who might, indeed, have envied those unhappy ones whose faculties have deserted them, contrived, from one or two of her tradesmen, to obtain the money so fearfully wanted. Then she hurried to the railway-station, and stated her desire to have a special train, which, in the quickest possible manner, should take her as far as Bridgewater. At Chelford, she quickly discovered, there was no station at all. After a delay, that implied no fault in the arrangements, but which was agonising when she thought how precious was her time, the engine was made ready, and she had the relief of feeling that she was progressing towards a possible deliverance from her horrible position. The officials, who knew her by name, supposed that a summons from some sick friend—possibly the captain, her son—had induced this agitated and sudden journey.

Her tradesmen had been well aware that she was likely to have money in the Leamington Bank. Money in the bank, indeed ! The four hundred pounds, which that monster M'Quantigan might shortly claim from her as the promised wages of murder, were awaiting his announcement that no more was to be dreaded from Miss March.

The train shrieked on. The light of day faded ; and the unhappy woman, alone (as, indeed, she had never been alone before), was able to think of all the woe, never, it might be, to know an ending, which was gathering darkly upon her. She saw Eva dying

—dying by the hand of a murderer, of whose violence, she believed, she was the only cause and contriver. She foresaw the heart-broken misery of Richard, and of the hatred into which his love towards herself would then turn. What even if her share in the matter were never made known to him? What if the doers of the deed succeeded in their apparent design of making the death appear an accidental one? Even then the secret, festering in her own bosom, would render her miserable and guilty for evermore whenever she saw or thought of Richard. But she had a strong persuasion that things would be worse than this. How many a murder, contrived with all possible skill, had been detected, and laid bare to the stroke of justice! And was it not very likely that, in this case, the watchful suspicion of a lover would peer through the disguises with which this crime was to be so surely shrouded.

Mrs. Ferrier had no subject wherewith to divide or distract her dreadful thoughts. The feelings which an hour before had been so intense in her, had now died out altogether. The thought that a very few hours might make her a murderess, had burnt up every other fear or feeling within her. What now, to her, was the dread of her son's foolish marriage? What even were the facts which, artfully tendered for her acceptance, had set poor Eva in the light of an adventuress of the very worst class? Mrs. Ferrier now considered that, while her own suspicions had created many of the facts, she had accepted many more on the witness of that Irishman she had made her assistant. And what credit could ever be due to the word of a would-be murderer?

Mrs. Ferrier hardly made the effort to justify herself now. She could no more go on repeating that her duty—her strict duty—had led her into the design, which a wicked man, unauthorised by herself, was going to bring to a criminal issue. Self-delusion was gone; and only self-tormenting remained. What duty could she verily plead? The meditated marriage might have been imprudent, disastrous, disgraceful. It might have been her actual duty very seriously to remonstrate with her son. But, she now saw very well, it could never be her duty to carry her opposition further. The captain was of age; and reason, revelation, and law, which all combine in placing children under the control of their parents, as

journey, and endeavoured to hope that she might not yet be too late. It was not certain that she would. The Leamington station-master had informed her that, as soon as she had started, he should telegraph on to Birmingham; and that the Birmingham official would, at her desire, also telegraph on to Bristol.

By thus making known her want beforehand, she might save some material delay. If nothing untoward occurred it was likely she might arrive at Bridgewater by ten. Possessed of this information, Mrs. Ferrier tried calmly to consider whether she might succeed in finding Miss March before the crime were irrevocably done. She might hope to get to Bridgewater two hours before midnight. Before twelve o'clock it was hardly probable that the wicked atrocity would be performed. “D—— Hall,” it might be hoped, would prove not beyond a two hours’ journey from Bridgewater. The night would be favoured with a full moon, and promised to be remarkably clear. How did this unhappy woman pray that nothing unforeseen might hinder her.

The train shrieked on. Warwickshire was left far away, and she was carried towards the southerly regions of England. All the little stoppages and hindrances of her journey we need not here note down. For her, a life of torment was comprehended in every one of them; but, upon the whole, the course of her progress was timed well, and little interruption befel her. It is a greater marvel that her senses did not wholly desert her; but on reaching Bridgewater, a very few minutes after ten, she commanded herself sufficiently to arrange the journey that lay before her still. If ladies travelling in special trains are not entitled to special attention, we should wish to be informed what manner of persons are. Mrs. Ferrier found the station authorities at Bridgewater very ready to hear and answer all she had to say.

She stood on the now quiet platform. The station-clock declared it to be five minutes past ten, and it was as bright a moonlight night as ever an English October beheld. She spoke to the person who had opened her carriage-door.

“I am in the greatest agony and distress possible. I have come—that is, I have found myself summoned to a house somewhere near Bridgewater, and I only know that its name begins with a D., and that it is somewhere between Bridgewater and Chelford; nearer Chelford, I understand—it is some ‘Hall.’”

“A ‘Hall’ on the road to Chelford, ma’am, and its name beginning with D.? I shouldn’t wonder if it might be Deverington Hall that you want, ma’am. Perhaps you know the gentleman who owns it—a Mr. Campion, ma’am?”

“Campion! no, I do not know who lives there. But I think that, very likely, it is the place I want.”

Again that name of Campion! But Mrs Ferrier had matters of life and death before her now, and to take a wrong journey would ruin her beyond remedy.

"It's of the utmost importance—it's more to me than my own life," she went on, "that I should reach this place before midnight! Can you assure me that it is the same? Pray tell me, is there a wood near it?"

Her informant could not say; but one of the porters was able to supply the needed information. Deverington Hall was very thickly planted around with wood.

"And, for Heaven's sake, tell me all you can about it! It is entered by gates opening on to the road?"

"Yes, ma'am, it is. But a little way before you come to them there's a private entrance through a gate into the wood, and thence into the garden, ma'am. That's what the family use."

"It is the same—it must be the same!" For the directions given in that horrible letter, which Mrs. Ferrier still held in her possession, exactly tallied with this man's description.

"It must be Deverington Hall; there's no other house at all like it between here and Chelford, ma'am, I very well know."

"Then I want to go, as quickly as I can, to Deverington Hall, and I will give any sum you can name, to be speedy. What will be my quickest way."

"If you're not afraid of the open air, ma'am, a gig would take you the fastest."

"Then get me one, I implore you. How long will it take me to get there?"

"That depends on the way you go, ma'am." And the conveyance was sent for at once.

Not many minutes had passed, ere the gig was in readiness, outside the station. The policeman on duty assisted Mrs. Ferrier to get in, and the station-master brought a rug for her. She sat herself down by the driver.

"The lady wants to get to Deverington Hall as soon as ever you can drive her there," said the policeman to the other. "Can

"Full moon? Yes—yes; full moon on the thirteenth—~~that's~~ sure."

"Then ma'am we can go the short way, as you wish it."

"Do, for mercy's sake, and be quick! How long will it take us to get there?"

"Not more than three quarters of an hour, ma'am; hardly so much."

"Thank God for that!" and off they drove. And Mrs. Ferrier's heart beat high with hope of saving the girl her son loved, from the terrible fate impending over her.

She could arrive at Deverington Hall by eleven o'clock, and it was next to impossible that anything before that hour could have been done. She threw her veil over her face, and resolved herself into as much composure as was possible to her.

We must just describe the way by which, at her special instance, Mrs. Ferrier was being carried now. For a mile or two it lay along a good high road. Then it wound through overhanging woods, which left no superfluous light at any time. But the real hindrance consisted in about the last mile of all. That latest stage passed through an open common, and was no proper road at all. The common, or down, was broken up in several places with gravel pits, and other excavations. In tolerable weather, and by day, or by a strong moonlight, the way might easily be threaded. In the dark it was like an enchanted ground, full of perils at every step.

They drove for half-an-hour, and emerged out of the shadow of the woods aforesaid. Only that stretch of common lay between them and the woods which immediately girdled Mr. Campion's mansion. Mrs. Ferrier, absorbed in her one thought, had been silent all the while. Nor had the driver presumed to disturb her. But now he halted at the very threshold of the open ground, and told the lady that the night was darker than he had ever had any idea of; and that to cross the common would be out of the question entirely. She started in terror at his words.

"Dark?—it cannot be! Did you not hear it was a full moon! Why, it was in the almanack!"

"Well, ma'am, whether it was in the almanack, or no, all I can say is, I don't see it *here*! Will you just be kind enough to look yourself, ma'am?"

She threw back her dark, thick veil, and looked at the sky. Dark it was, indeed. What had happened to the night? Had clouds come over the heaven? Clouds! There was a full attendance of stars in the firmament; it seemed as if the muster had included all. And the Milky Way was there. But what of the full moon? Mrs. Ferrier turned her eyes to the quarter in which

the Queen of Heaven might be expected to show herself, and then she perceived that the moon was totally eclipsed.

Totally eclipsed! Instead of the round of shining silver, there was but a disc of rusty red; and stars were now the only comforters of the night. There was a moment in which Mrs. Ferrier forgot that this had happened in the course of the heavenly way, and felt as if the very skies themselves were dooming her to destruction. That awful eclipse might take away her hopes for ever. She clasped her hands in anguish, almost as if beseeching the host of heaven to give her the light, without which she must perish for ever. Then she spoke to the driver.

"What, then, am I to do? I remember hearing, a few days ago, that this was to be. But other matters had utterly driven it out of my head. Can you not go on? Oh, I am ruined and wretched for ever if we do not reach there in time! I implore you go on if you can!"

"Indeed, ma'am, I'm really most sorry; but we can't. We should be sure to roll into one of these quarries here about."

"Gracious heaven! This is maddening! Let us go on foot. Let us walk! I will give you any money; the whole value of the horse and gig, with pleasure, if you will guide me across as quickly as you can?"

"It's impossible, I do assure you, ma'am. Even I, who have crossed it many a time in the daylight, couldn't steer my way now, and for you it would be out of the question."

"Then what is to become of me? How shall I ever get there? It's a matter of life and death; more than of life and death! What am I to do?"

"There's but one way, ma'am, and that is to turn back, and get, as quickly as we can, into the other road. The sooner we start the better. Instead of gaining an hour, we shall lose about an hour and a half; but we had better lose no more than we can help, ma'am."

It may be questioned whether it would not have been better to wait where they were until the moon had emerged from her eclipse; but to keep still was intolerable, and Mrs. Ferrier had no such accurate knowledge of astronomy as could assure her of the wisdom of this course. She told the driver to turn back, and go the other and more circuitous road. She would have urged him to the utmost speed, only that would have endangered an entire stoppage, and a worse delay. It was to her by far the most agonising hour of all that terrible evening. It seemed as if the crime were fated to be done. Heaven frowned upon her, and spurned her away from being the instrument of hindering it. What was before her now? Would it all become known? Would the world believe in

her innocence? Surely, no; and in this life too, retribution, even beyond her actual deserts, would speedily come upon her. Oh, if it might but prove that she came not too late, after all! What thing in life could ever give her sorrow again?

Instead of being eleven o'clock, it was nearer one than twelve, when the gig at last drew up before the gate in the wood near Deverington Hall. The moon was shining again, though partly overshadowed still. Mrs. Ferrier directed the man to wait. She should presently return, and, possibly, with some one else beside her. She entered the wood, turned down the by-path to the right, and was soon at the door in the wall. It was open, indeed. She was soon in the gardens, and turning according to the directions of that letter, approached the Italian garden in the front of the house. All was very still. Patches of reflected moonshine marked out each window to be seen. Not thus denoted, however, was the French window, furthest to the left on the ground floor. A light, unlike the pure and holy radiance of the moon, was shining there from within. Mrs. Ferrier went up to it at once. She found it partly open, and—she went in. The lamp, which stood on a bracket in the little vestibule, threw its yellow light on a staircase beyond. In the track of that light she went on.

EMBROIDERY

Ply the needle and bend the head,
 The tapestry of life must be
 Coloured with many a curious thread
 Of ebon and of ivorie.

Skeins of orange and purple and blue,
 First take and 'broider into flowers,
 Fair types of those sweet ones that strew,
 The pathway of our earlier hours ;

With here and there a sombre thread,
 To show where the faint shadows fall,
 When, truants from our books, we fled
 To loiter in the hazel dell ;

Or wandering under woodlands dim,
 Beside the trout-stream quick and cool,
 In learning how to fish or swim,
 Neglected lessons taught at school ;—

Ply the needle and bend the head,
 The brightest of bright colours take,
 Amber yet moist from its sea-bed,
 Violet amethyst and lake ;

Twining them into beauteous shapes,
 To true-love knots and hearts akin,
 Roses and trellis-work, where grapes
 Hang down in glossiness of skin ;

Showing the seasons, when with rare
 Fond thoughts our pulses danced in glee,
 And, lit by love, the earth shone fair
 As sunset on a tropic sea ;—

With softest wool of Afric's dye,
Memorials make, each ebon spot
Will tell of hopes that bloomed to die,
Of friends whose memories serve them not.

The sweet rosemary, bitter rue,
Must on the varied web appear,
But with them violets of rare blue,
White lilies such as martyrs wear.

Joining the beauteous with the sad,
As rainbows over clouds are thrown,
To teach that God would have us glad,
Despite all epitaphs on stone.

ROBERT HANNAY.

‘LONDON NEWSBOYS

“I’ve got the death of him, sir! *Star! Standard!* here is it is—One penny!” Such was the ghastly announcement shouted in my ear, one evening last autumn, a few hours after a great man had gone to his rest. The words were ferocious, were horrible; but the newsboy knew his trade. Other boys had been prowling about with merely “the alarming illness.” That cry had worn out. Here was the actual event. Here was a revival of excitement, and the vendor of the news was moderate. He was no extortioner, he merely asked the ordinary price—here was “The death of him,” and for only “One penny.”

The newsboy revels in creating a sensation. Any new and startling event is extra meat, and drink, and clothing to him. He thrives on a horrid murder, and fattens on a sanguinary battle. War brings to him prosperity. The newsboy knows well that a weak point in human nature is a love of stirring novelty, so he strikes home with his announcements. Where is it I have read the recommendation of a delectable piece of authorship on the score that it will “freeze your blood?” People like to have their blood frozen by the congelating process of sheer horror. It is a luxury not often to be procured in these degenerate days. We do not travel now keeping a sharp look out on each side for the robber’s pointed blunderbuss and threatening knife, and it is a long time since a ghost story circulated capable of enduring even a schoolboy’s scrutiny. Now that the German war is a thing of the past, and the Hyde Park riots at an end, I fear the writers of newspaper placards will be rather hard put to it for appetising announcements. There is not at the moment any opportunity for that free play and brilliant touch which only great events call forth. The newsboy will again languish, his voice will weaken, his aspect droop. If the French would but come over! I fancy I see and hear the newsboy the morning after that event. I see his face beaming with the consciousness of a good time having arrived at last. He knows his value now. “Landing of the French army! Desperate battle at Dover! Awful loss! Defeat of the English! Rapid advance of the enemy! One penny!” Great would be the newsboy’s triumph. And if the foe really did smilingly present himself some morning, say at the “Elephant and Castle,” at Newington, for the purpose of taking a little refreshment prior to paying a few visits in the City, my impression is the newsboy would be about the last person to beat a retreat, and as the enemy advanced, he would, ever and anon catch the sounds in front of him,—“Awful news! *Telegraph!*”

Standard! The French coming up! Expected slaughter of man, woman, and child! Here you are, sir; one penny!"

If all trades at present known to me should fail, I'll try the selling penny newspapers in the streets. I have had my eye on a youth thus engaged for some years past. He was a very rough customer when he begun; his garments were coarse and worn, and of adipose tissue, his body had little or none. But the Crimean war made him. He grew daily; his eyes brightened, his chest expanded, his manner became bold, not to say imperious. He is still at the work, but he is evidently now a man of money. He is fat and rosy. I think he is married; at all events, a young person is constantly with him, and appears to do the hardest part of the work, so I take her to be his wife. Disinclination for strong exertion is natural to men who have become obese. My young friend, as I have said, is now fat, and I am afraid is slightly given to beer.

My astute reader, do you know life, and have you formed any impression on this important point,—which is the best way to make progress, to bring yourself down on every obstacle in your path with sledge-hammer force, or to deal with everybody and everything in lightest, gentlest, most insinuating fashion, as though you were handling gold-leaf? I ask this question, because if I should try the street newspaper business, it would be well that I should previously form some opinion as to the mode of address likely to be most generally successful in that branch of industry. There are the two styles. My young friend above always assumed the vigorous. Clear, hearty, strong, he faced you in your path, and regularly shot you with the news. He quietly waited your approach, and then sent you staggering under a well-directed volley. "Alarming news from America! great battle! very alarming! Here, sir; the latest news—*Standard—Telegraph—Star.*" You scarcely liked to pass him. If you did pass him, you fancied a derisive glance directed towards you, as much as to say—"Here is a man for you, a hard-hearted, soulless fellow, who remains so perfectly unmoved by the most tremendous events, that he will not lay out even a penny to learn particulars." My young friend presented his newspaper much as though it were a blunderbuss, and you yielded your money as under pressure of an irresistible demand. Now, that was *his* fashion. Then arose another young gentleman, and *his* fashion was different. He would run up to you with a paper neatly folded, and hand it to you as a matter of course, blandly observing that it was the second edition; and you felt you could hardly be rude enough to refuse a thing so politely proffered, and the cost of which was so small. I am ignorant as to which of these two gifted youths made most money, but I admired each as

adopting his own marked peculiar style. If you have a fancy to play the ruffian, do not mince matters, show the features of ruffianism in all their powerful fulness. Pray do not dilute them. Men may have some sort of respect for you, if you exhibit the character you have chosen in its unshorn length and breadth. Or, if you prefer the opposite *role*, then, pray, discard all independent airs or speech. You have chosen to crawl, my friend, so crawl, and smile pleasantly at a shove, and for a kick return thanks.

I believe these two boys were partners subsequently. They ply together still, the younger partner being the more active, as is proper. I am afraid their business is at present too good for a Joint Stock Company, limited; but times may change. Beer, and the cares of a family, may operate prejudicially on the senior member of the firm, and bankruptcy may impend. Then there will be another opportunity of displaying the advantages of Joint Stock enterprise, and some morning we shall be startled with the announcement that "Messrs Stickatnothing & Co. are instructed to invite subscriptions for shares in the Grand Universal News-vending Company, limited, which enterprise is based on the business so long carried on by a few private capitalists, in front of the 'Beadle and Baton,' and is capable of enormous extension."

I am quite sure that none but youths of ability succeed in the street news-vending trade. I am very sorry when I see a poor little ragged, shoeless urchin, standing, with a lot of papers on his arm, and looking piteously for customers. I know he has mistaken his occupation. He can neither be impressive nor persuasive. He can merely look and feel poor and wretched. Yet he does not claim, nor receive, the compassion bestowed on the pure beggar. Hence he is a failure. If he were decently dressed, and were a sprightly lad, he would succeed as a newsboy; if his rags were worse than they are, and he had but one leg, and one arm were in a sling, and his eyes seemed red with crying, and he were a proficient in the true mendicant whine, he would flourish as a beggar. As it is, the workhouse is his only resource.

There used to be a man at the "Elephant and Castle," at Newington, who, I daresay, some readers will remember. His style was the grimly-comical, and he was an awkward antagonist in that elegant species of humour termed "chaff." "Take a *Punch*, sir? —a *Punch*? Have a *Punch*?" he called out in a stentorian voice.

you wonder at his so evidently wasting his time. But the boy sees deeper than you do. He has his eye upon a man who shows signs of yielding, and to that man he has made up his mind he will sell a paper. And, sure enough, presently a hand is seen furtively feeling in sundry pockets, a penny is produced, and the newsboy triumphs. And there is something infectious in the purchasing of newspapers. If one man buys, another will be rendered uneasy, and very likely he will buy, too. I have a great dislike myself to face a man in an omnibus reading a paper. He has a disagreeable advantage over me. When he is tired of involuntarily staring me out of countenance, he can read for a few minutes. And it is irritating to see his face gradually assume an expression of interest. You want to know what he is reading about, and why now he frowns, and now he smiles. Then you think how foolish you were not to buy a paper for yourself; and, directly you see a boy, you get one.

I much prefer the street-boy to the boy at railway stations. There is an engaging readiness about the one which is wanting in the other. The railway-boy always seems to me so surly. He wants the uprightness and good-humour of the street-boy. He moves along the platform in an indifferent, ungracious way, and thrusts the paper at you, and takes your penny in manner akin to that with which a Hansom cabman receives a sixpenny fare. I like the rollicking air with which the street-boy bounds on to the step of the omnibus: the penetrating voice in which he sends his announcements ringing into the ears of the furthestmost passengers: the wonderful dexterity with which he hunts up change: and the agility with which he drops down on *terra firma*, and runs back to attack another vehicle. All this is wanting in the railway-boy, who is a dreary young person, mechanical in his movements, uninteresting in his aspect, and unattractive in his manner.

You seldom see street-boys quarrel. There is a little competition, but very rarely ill-temper. There seems an amicable understanding that, while each may do the best for himself, he is not to try and wrest from his neighbour any advantage which the latter has fairly gained. If a little boy sells you a paper, hitherto supplied by a big competitor, he is not set upon by the latter the moment you have passed by. Free trade is fully recognised, and strife is eschewed.

There are two points which give the street newsboy a marked advantage over other hawkers. In the first place, his wares are sure to be genuine; and, secondly, the demand for them recurs daily. Such things as knives, combs, stationery, and books, are sold in the streets; but, I take it, that none but the most venturesome invest their money therein. And if you buy a three-bladed

knife, or a magnificent memorandum-book, you cannot be expected to deal again in those articles under six months, at least. But there can be no deceit about a *Telegraph*, and no attractiveness about it to-day will prevent the want of another to-morrow. There are times of excitement and times of slackness even in this important department of trade, but there is never any actual stoppage either of demand or supply.

I once asked a goaded waiter when he managed to get his meals. His reply was: "I very seldom eat, and I *never* sleep!" He was very pale and thin, and his response really made me uncomfortable. I began to doubt his reality. He might be something unearthly. He flitted about morning, noon, and night; perhaps one day he might fly away altogether. The newsboy must have a tolerably active time of it. He gets the papers at dawn; the incessant jumping on omnibus steps must bear no small resemblance to treadmill work; his lungs and throat are never at rest; he is exposed to wet and cold; his arms must ache under the burden of the papers; and the general fatigue at the end of the day, when the last "Evening" is disposed of, must be difficult of realisation. My young friends, I wish you still lighter spirits, and still heavier pockets. I wish you tremendous novelties, provided always they be of a harmless description, and such as will cause a regular chorus of shouts every time one of your fraternity becomes visible—"Paper—paper! Boy—boy! Paper—paper!"

THE CARBONARI

THE origin of the secret society of the Carbonari ("charcoal-burners") is involved in much doubt and uncertainty. Some authorities assert that it certainly existed during the middle ages in Germany, reaching from thence to France and the Low Countries, but never giving action to its peculiar views, or asserting its presence as a political power, till the early part of the present century; others, again, maintain that it only originated during the French occupation of Southern Italy during the time of Napoleon I. In earlier times the Carbonari might have no political secrets to conceal, and from this cause be but little known; but when it gradually merged into a society for the attainment of freedom from the thralldom of dominant power and tyranny, then it may first have come into that prominence which called forth the fear with which it has long been regarded by the governments of those countries where it has established itself. Nothing is thus positively known of its early history, nor can much be ascertained of direct and positive certainty as to its resuscitation in the beginning of this century; but the Carbonari began to make themselves known and felt first when Napoleon assumed the Iron Crown of Italy. The class from whom the society took its name gave it also many of the peculiar terms and symbols which they used in their ordinary intercourse with one another, as well as in the process of initiation. They had a printed constitution, laws, and rites. These were, as may be supposed, thoroughly liberal in their aims and ideas, and also asserted the right of every man to worship the Deity according to his own convictions. An absolute equality was observed among all the members in the lodges, and social distinctions were, for the time, completely set aside.

The degrees of initiation were two, the second being given after an interval of six months from the first, and were of such a nature as to call up in the minds of new members much of the supernatural and terrible. With eyes bandaged, the "apprentice"—as the new candidate was termed—was brought before the presiding officers of the lodge, and there questioned in regard to name, character, courage, &c. Still blindfolded, he was led forth to undergo certain significant ceremonials, and then brought before the tribunal again, to receive the oath of secrecy, which was administered by the presiding officer or grand-master. At the last words of the oath, "So help me God!" the officers of the lodge struck blocks of wood, which stood before them, with hatchets, which they carried as

symbols of their authority, and the bandage being then removed from the eyes of the candidate, he beheld a circle of axes gleaming around his head, and was told that by these he would meet his death should he venture to betray any of the secrets of the fraternity. After being instructed in the secret signs of the order, so far as he was entitled to receive them, he had leisure to observe the appearance of the hall in which he stood. Seated at large blocks of wood, shaped like the trunks of trees, upon which lay their axes, were the officers of the society—these axes being used in the same manner as the chairman of a meeting uses his hammer, to enforce order and attention, as well as to make other signals. In the Roman lodges, however, daggers were used instead of hatchets. Over the heads of the officers were suspended the several symbols, as well as the initials of the passwords of the order; and round the sides of the rude and otherwise undecorated hall, were seated the members, according to their ranks and degrees. When entering for the second and higher initiation, the candidate, or “apprentice,” underwent another severe examination, and received another and still more solemn oath, after which he was invested with a scarf of black, blue, and red, signifying charcoal, smoke, and fire, other signs and passwords being also given him.

The laws and regulations were of the strictest kind, and took cognisance of the moral conduct of the members in their everyday life; the slightest punishment being suspension of membership, and frequently expulsion from the society; while, for any serious infringement of the rules of the order, the punishment was certain—death—no matter what precautions the culprit took to secure himself from the vengeance of the order.

The Carbonari first sought to take direct action in political matters in Italy, when they urged Murat, after Napoleon had installed him as king of Naples, to declare against the emperor, and proclaim the independence of Italy; if in this they had been successful, no doubt Murat would have soon been set aside, and a republic proclaimed; since the society hated both him and their former king, Ferdinand, with an equal hatred. Various causes concurred in making this attempt a popular one among all classes; the nobles thought they would regain many of their ancient privileges, of which they had recently been deprived. The army was jealous of the French officers, now largely employed in their ranks. The lower classes, ever easily induced, were instigated and urged to

aristocracy among themselves, and rise a free and regenerate people. Great numbers of the lower orders of the clergy were also initiated, so that the Court of Rome had no less reason at times to fear those to whom it naturally looked for the most willing support than the spreading of liberal opinions among the community.

The Carbonari, however, failed to induce Murat to act in the manner they wished; and, becoming jealous of their real intentions, Murat began to use measures to disperse and extirpate the society. Soon after, the Carbonari offered to assist King Ferdinand to regain his throne, conditionally upon his recognising the Carbonari as a legally authorised body, and the granting of a liberal constitution to the country. This offer was likewise refused, and shortly after the Congress of Vienna ousted Murat, and restored Ferdinand to the throne of Naples, when he immediately exerted all his power to put down the Carbonari; but he only scotched the snake—he could not kill it. The congress having restored Italy to the domination of Austria and the Pope, produced an irreconcilable hatred between the rulers and their subjects, which, from 1815 to 1848, kept Italy in a state of chronic insurrection—a condition of things to which the Carbonari largely contributed. The society at this time began to propagate and spread their doctrines in Switzerland, France, and Germany; and similar societies, under various names, soon sprang up in those countries. Some of these were thoroughly military in their organisation, and met by night to practise the evolutions of a regular army. One of these new societies, however, bearing the name of the “Decided,” was nothing more than an organised body of brigands, who surrounded themselves with emblems of terror, such as skulls and crossbones, their passwords being Death, Terror, Sadness, and Mourning. The Government, for long, were unable to put down this society, who plundered and murdered all who were hateful to them; but, by dint of severe and stern examples, they ultimately succeeded in dispersing its members.

Throughout the whole of the Italian states, the various secret societies and branches of the Carbonari held communion with each other; although they severally maintained their own rules and rites, yet all were disposed to unite for the furtherance of their primary object—the revolutionising of the whole country. A central body received from each branch, at stated times, regular statistics of their numbers and condition, and this superior body issued “passes,” which enabled their emissaries to obtain food and lodging from members whose houses they might pass. Thus holding communion with one another, the societies easily planned an insurrection, about 1817, in the Roman states, to commence at Macerata, where they were to assemble, and sieze the barracks, expecting that

many of the soldiers stationed there would join with them. An accident betrayed the scheme to the authorities, and the police searching into the matter, the plot was ferretted out, and a number of the Carbonari arrested, and confined in prison, where they were put to the "question," to elicit the names and purposes of the chief conspirators. Some were sent to the scaffold, and others were consigned to prison for various terms of years. In spite of this and similar failures, the society still continued to increase in number, and extend the radii of their operations. In Spain, the Carbonari increased rapidly: so much so, that an *emeute* which they originated was instrumental in procuring a new constitution for the country. An effort was again made in Naples, soon after the attempt in the Roman states, and with better prospects of success, since they had among their members, officers and soldiers of every regiment in the Neapolitan service, and could also reckon upon a number of dragoons and artillery. It began in Naples, and the city was kept in a state of fearful anarchy and disorder, until the king consented to the granting of a liberal constitution, which was all that the more moderate members of the society wished, though many were anxious for a republican form of government. The number of new members enrolled at this time amounted to upwards of 600,000, and there were about 300 "lodges" in Naples alone.

During the progress of this revolution, many sanguinary scenes took place, but a guard of the more moderate Carbonari was organised, and were greatly instrumental in maintaining order and quiet. Their success in Naples gave renewed hope and ardour to the patriots in the northern part of the peninsula, and created great uneasiness among the ruling princes and dukes, who strove, by all means in their power, to extirpate the society. Still, in spite of confiscation and the penalties visited now and then upon their members, they organised another insurrection in Piedmont in 1821, and a number of the military joined with them here also. The King of Sardinia was obliged to abdicate, and his successor granted a new constitution; an army was, however, ordered by the emperor of Austria to invade Piedmont, and by its aid a counter-revolution was easily effected, and the new king, Charles Felix, gladly seized the opportunity of withdrawing the recently-granted constitution. Thus again, through the concentration against them of forces infinitely superior, their banner, which bore the legend of "God and the People," was once more withdrawn from the light of day. But the struggle was abandoned on the side of the confederated societies with honour, with full consciousness of their strength, and with greater and more fervent hopes for the future.

The occupation of Paris by the allied armies in 1815 was the means of introducing Carbonarism into the ranks of the Russian army, and this fact remained quite unknown, in spite of the ubiquitous spy system of the Emperor Alexander. Russia at that time, however, was entirely unfitted for a liberal government, and, consequently, on the outbreak of the tumult at St. Petersburg on the accession of Nicholas in 1825, after an obstinate conflict and great loss of life, the conspirators were routed; a great number of officers were imprisoned, and many executed, while others were sent to the wilds of Siberia. This was the only attempt of the Carbonari to carry out the views of their society in that country.

In France, a great many lodges had been established, subject, like those in the Roman states, to a grand central body, who were possessed of full statistics regarding the subject lodges, and the whole were systematised in a manner these societies had never been before. Great care was taken as to the persons whom they admitted into their body, in order that no spies might betray them and their designs to the government. A continual watch was kept for a favourable opportunity for an insurrection, and at every great public demonstration, large numbers of the Carbonari were certain to be present, ready to give effect to their designs, should circumstances prove propitious. They were greatly aided by the army—numbers of whom were members of the society—in the outbreak which took place (in 1822) simultaneously in several cities; but this attempt eventually proved abortive, through the rashness and indiscretion of some of their leaders, and much blood was shed in the suppression of the *emeute* by the government. In 1830, the French Revolution again roused the energies of the Carbonari throughout the various countries where the society was established, although, in the different outbreaks which took place throughout the Continent, their influence could only be distinctly noted in Italy. There the Austrian army again effectually intervened between them and their objects, many dreadful atrocities being committed by the victors. After this, the Carbonari confined their endeavours more particularly to the spread of revolutionary and republican ideas.

How much may be laid to the charge of the secret societies for the disturbances which took place in 1848-49 it is impossible to say; but though the revolution in France at that time was more of a spontaneous popular outbreak than an organised revolution, yet there is no doubt the secret societies were in active work prior to it, preparing for that which many saw and felt was almost inevitable. There had been an outbreak in Sicily in January, 1848, and it may be said that the French Revolution was inaugurated there.

For many years the influence of the Carbonari was lost in the superior efforts of the society of Young Italy, under the leadership of Mazzini. An attempt, made by this society, also proved unavailing ; its objects were much the same as the Carbonari,—the freedom of their country from foreign domination, the union of all the petty states into one grand whole, merging all names in the common designation of Italy, and under this forming a great European republic. Their conspiracy was discovered, and the confederacy broken up, many of the leaders arrested and executed while others made their escape into Switzerland, Britain, and France.

Owing to the recent amalgamation of most of the Italian states under Victor Emmanuel, and the objects of the Carbonari being so far attained, the society may no longer be thought necessary in many of the Italian provinces ; and as a body of restless men, ever ready for strife and bloodshed, they are now never heard of, far less dreaded or feared. It has been said that Napoleon III, who was at one time a member of the society, entered on the Italian war from a desire to conciliate the Carbonari, who were then supposed to be in active operation, and who had repeatedly threatened him for departing from the principles which he had sworn to maintain. Another story, but not a very probable one, is that relating to Orsini, who, it has been asserted, was never executed, another criminal having taken his place on the scaffold ; this substitution being effected in order to propitiate the Carbonari, the emperor and Orsini both having been members of the same lodge.

Such is a brief outline of the career and purposes of this remarkable society, a brotherhood of ardent and enterprising spirits, associated for a purpose for which we, in our own country, have no need to unite ourselves. We can, however, from the standpoint of our own liberties and freedom, sympathise sincerely with those who have suffered so much and bled so profusely for the attainment of similar privileges ; and while we cannot always approve of the means taken to attain the objects for which they associated, yet the end for which they laboured deserves our respect and approval.

W. T. D.



A LIFE'S MYSTERY

BY CLINTON HOPE.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BREAKING OF OLD PROMISES AND THE FORMING OF NEW ONES.

LILIAS did not err in calculating that the effect of her allurements upon Lord Welgrave would be to render him a frequent visitor at the Hall. From the time of his first meeting with the dark-haired enchantress, he had thought of little else, and lost no opportunity of accompanying his friend in his excursions to Sedgley; but soon he became impatient of confining his interviews with Liliass to the periods of Mr. Randal's calls, and making the following day's hunt an excuse for seeking Sir Shenton, he presented himself alone. It is the first step in anything that is difficult, and subsequent to this, Lord Welgrave came almost daily, and at every fresh communion with the baronet's daughter, his love and admiration for her increased.

Inwardly Liliass rejoiced, as she remarked the growing attachment of their visitor for her; rejoiced because the achievement of the end, to which she had immolated her truth and young Arnold's happiness, was so near; but regarded in any other point of view, than that of being a preserver of the secrets of her life, she dreaded the thought of the union she planned. To be forced to listen placidly to loving speeches from one whom she cared not for in the least—indeed, for whom, on the contrary, she entertained almost a hatred, on account of the position she anticipated he would hold towards her—was unendurable to her haughty spirit. No chains had she ever worn except those of her own

forging, and she ill-brooked the thought of having her actions guided by the will—perchance, the caprice—of another; yet she must learn to bear this galling dependence, not merely with tacit acquiescence, but seeming cheerfulness.

Lord Welgrave was too youthful, and his passion too ardent, for him to reflect much upon the change he proposed making; and no more than a month had passed from the time of his introduction to Liliás, when he offered her the choice of becoming a partner in his wealth and honours. Sir Shenton Bellamy, with Mr. Randal and Ada Hartop, had gone for a long drive; and Liliás was left alone in the vast stillness of the house, to amuse herself with her books, drawings, and music, or, as she more frequently did when solitary, employ herself with reflection. Lord Welgrave was announced in a loud tone of voice that made Miss Bellamy start; she had been leaning back upon the seat, with closed eyes and absent thoughts; but the moment she recognised her visitor, a smile of glad welcome illumined her face, clouded a moment back by a look of mingled melancholy and *ennui*.

Her visitor evidently fancied—and with what delight can be conceived only by those in love—that there was affection in the manner with which she greeted him; but in holding such a supposition, he only further proved the universally acknowledged fact, that it is unwise to trust over much to appearances, for Liliás would have been just as well satisfied with the company of any person capable of drawing her from her abstraction. Generally, Lord Welgrave was in no lack of that lighter kind of talk, so advantageous on most occasions—a chit-chat, which, discarding in its run anything profound, is yet not so unmeaning as to merit the appellation of tattle. This morning how different! there was an absence of spirit in his humour, and cheerfulness in his descriptions, and he paused every now and then to recal his thoughts, or search for a word expressive of his meaning. He did not long, however, continue conversing upon topics of indifference, but casting aside his former hesitation of speech, related the object for which he had

ambitious hopes, or perjure her soul by the utterance of a sentiment she did not feel; and an involuntary chill seized her, as the lie hovered upon her lips. It did not pass them; a something too powerful to conquer constrained her to silence, and pale and cold she remained listening to the pleadings of her prostrate suitor—till, his patience being exhausted, and his pride wounded by her seeming indifference, he turned to depart. He could not leave, and this Liliás appeared aware of, for she made no effort to recal him.

Instantly Lord Welgrave returned to his station at the feet of his idol, entreating her to give him a definite reply.

A tremor flitted over her features, from which she had at length removed her clasped fingers; as in attempted gaiety she asked, "Must I say, in so many words, I will be yours."

"Yes, if you love me," returned her admirer, in whom an undefined distrust of her conduct had arisen; "tell me the truth, I beseech you."

A sigh, which she could not stifle, answered his question, and with perplexity and sorrow, Lord Welgrave once more moved with the intent of leaving her. This time she laid her hand upon his arm, and in tones made nearly unintelligible by agitation, faltered a wish for him to remain.

The extent of her dissimulation struck her more forcibly at this moment than it had ever done before; she was disgusted with herself, and, curiously enough, angry with her companion that he should be so easily duped.

"Why doesn't he perceive the truth?" she thought, and save me from continuing a wrong I have not the resolution to relinquish."

Unfortunately, his lordship was too willing to trust implicitly, and argued that her strange behaviour was the result of surprise, nervousness, delight, anything instead of loveless calculation. He was overjoyed; thanked her repeatedly for her "goodness," her "condescension;" bestowed upon her every admiring and tender appellation; depicted his past agony of doubt, and essayed to paint their future bliss: in short, he was guilty of all the extravagance which successful love can plunge a really generous-hearted man into.

"Dear Lord Welgrave," Liliás interposed, in a perfectly collected voice, "papa will soon be home—go now; for I would rather be the first to inform him of our engagement; you can ask his consent to-morrow."

Her lover gazed with ineffable devotion into her midnight orbs, that fell abashed before the warmth of his looks.

"You could not bid me do a more difficult thing than leave

you," was his reply ; " but since you have accepted the office of my ruler, and have given your gracious consent for me to be your devoted servant in all things, I must obey ; only, dearest, let not the purgatorial period of my absence be extended far ; allow me to come this evening, within sight of paradise, then to receive its presiding deity from her father. I can know," he resumed with earnestness, letting fall the lively air he had before used, " nought but uneasiness, till I am assured beyond the faintest doubt, that you will be mine, my own dear wife."

As he uttered the last words, lingering fondly over them—Lilias impatiently stopped him.

" As you have sworn allegiance to me," she said, half seriously, half playfully, " you ought implicitly attend to my commands. You must bid me good-bye, and that until to-morrow, which will be as early as I can speak to my father.

Her lover seemed very sorrowful at this dismissal, yet disputed not her right to his obedience, merely pressing the hand held out to him at parting with a prolonged tenderness that was very distressing to her.

When at the door, Lord Welgrave turned back to give a final look at his relentless mistress ; and then, with a singular oppression of grief, took his departure ; but his sadness was only transitory, whereas his delight was enduring. " She says she loves me and will be mine," he repeated over and over again with ecstatic pleasure, the while Lilias, in the obscurity of her chamber, was bewailing the falsehood she had put upon him.

" Might I not," she reasoned, " be as exempt from suspicion had I accepted Owen. Marry I must, sometime, to prevent idle tongues coining a reason for my celibacy ; though is it obligatory that I soar beyond my level ? Yes," she added, after a prolonged pause, " it is. Whatever my past life may have been, it will be nothing when I am Marchioness of Welgrave. Hints of my disappearance from Blackheath will be powerless to injure my reputation then, since the rank and importance of my position will provide a shelter for me ; but as Mrs. Arnold my history is open to the inquiry of any one who chooses to meddle with it. What a pity it is that Owen does not possess the broad acres and high descent of the Marquis of Welgrave, as he would be a son-in-law more to papa's taste than the other ! Poor papa ! he must comfort himself as best he may, should this prove a disappointment. And for me, why should I ever dream of love ? Is it possible that I could have been swayed by it, when I yielded so ridiculously to the solicitations of Owen ? Oh, no ; it surely was not so : and yet, if not, why this reluctance to irrevocably divide myself from him ? Why this deep despairing

sorrow, when I reflect upon the anguish he must feel, and the shame and humiliation I experience, at the thought of facing his reproaches for my infidelity? Why, ah! why, if I do not care for him, am I so wretched when my boldest hopes are on the point of being realised?" And as Liliás thus interrogated her heart, she buried her face in the cushions of the couch to drown her sobs.

The next morning, when Liliás was alone with her father, in a few words she made known her betrothal to Lord Welgrave. There was a slight embarrassment in her looks, but no trembling of the voice, which was calm, and full as ever.

Sir Shenton received her communication with an amazed stare and an involuntary exclamation, clearly not expressive of rapture.

"And what did you say to him?" he said at length anxiously.

"That if you consented, I would marry him," his daughter answered firmly.

"But, Lily," remonstrated the baronet, rising from his seat in great agitation, "I had no idea that you cared for Lord Welgrave, and am quite unprepared for this announcement. Are you sure that you rightly understand your feelings towards him?"

"Yes, quite sure," she answered firmly; "and having pledged myself to him, I cannot retract, if I would."

Sir Shenton heaved a deep sigh of regret.

"Do you remember, Liliás," he resumed sadly, "when I proposed your engagement with Owen Arnold, how you prayed that I would never urge you to leave me, as you hoped to live with me always?"

"I do, dear papa," was Liliás's calm response, "and, of course, I meant it when I said so; for I had not met with Lord Welgrave, and didn't imagine that I should ever feel any inclination to marry."

The baronet mused awhile, then broke the silence that had intervened since Liliás had last spoken by asking her, with well-nigh a stern seriousness, if the rank of her lover had aught to do with her acceptance of him. "If it has, Liliás," he said, emphatically, "I warn you that in the pursuit of ambition you will find only degradation. I cannot believe," he added, mournfully, "you would be swayed by such a paltry consideration; but your sudden consent to his offer leads me to think, against my will, that it is so; your manner implies that it is not affection which induces you to give yourself to him. You are young—very young, my child—not yet eighteen; then why are you desirous of yoking yourself to a man for whom you entertain no ardent feelings of devotion? I did not meet my sweet Inez, your mother, till I had past my youth,

and it may be that you will not meet with your destined partner for a few years, and you can afford to wait."

"My word is given, papa," interrupted his daughter impetuously, "and I cannot alter affairs now. When you have ratified my consent by yours, you will not regret it. It is only the suddenness of my communication that has shocked you. Have you any objection to him?" she resumed, coaxingly twining her fair arms around the old man's neck, "Is he not agreeable, generous, everything desirable?"

"He is so, indeed," replied Sir Shenton, half-reluctantly; "nevertheless, I would rather you had not promised to bestow your hand upon him. I say so, I suppose, because it grieves me to think of parting with you; but this is selfish, and, Lillias, if I do not do wrong in telling you, I had other views for you." I desired you to become young Arnold's wife; he loves you faithfully, I am sure, despite your refusal of him, and would have made you happy. Perhaps it was absurd to nourish such a hope; and I can only now, my darling, pray that you may be fortunate in your choice, and formally give my consent to your union with Lord Welgrave." He spoke with a tone of resignation, if not of happiness, for already he had begun to look upon the bright side of the picture; and to think that his daughter might have done worse, after all, than marry a man with the united personal and worldly advantages possessed by her suitor.

Lillias thanked her father for his consent, but with an air that bespoke an absence of heart-delight in his acquiescence, which still farther mystified the poor baronet. "He will be here directly, dear papa; receive him kindly," she urged, as she was about to retire from the room.

"To be sure I will, my dearest child," was her parent's answer; "if you love him, can I do other than like him?" Lillias's communication had evidently agitated her father to a great extent, for he walked uneasily backwards and forwards the length of the large apartment, his usually calm, clear brow gathered into a perplexed frown. "I cannot fancy," he thought, "that Lillias is capable of

announcement of the marquis's arrival put his troubled thoughts, for the time, to flight. The visitor looked somewhat pale and anxious at first, but Sir Shenton's frankness quickly dissipated any fears he might have tortured himself with, and he was soon conversing with that gentleman upon the topic of settlement and pin-money, with the impatience a newly accepted lover always displays, concerning the wearisomeness of that very requisite piece of business.

When these troublesome and forbidding details were completed, they repaired to the drawing-room, where Ada, uselessly industrious, was working upon a piece of fairy-like embroidery; and Lillas, to whom all species of application was most abhorrent, was down upon her knees before the fire, trying to coax a snow-white kitten over her clasped hands.

Ada, with her head bent over the muslin-work, did not observe the entrance of either; and Lillas, having her back to the door, and her sole attention engrossed by the refractory gambols of her plaything, was not likely to hear the sound of their approach; so they had the pleasure of viewing the kitten take a bold leap, after trying to escape by every way but the one wanted, when Lillas, laughing with the fresh joyousness of a child, sprang up to see her father and her affianced standing with amused looks a yard or two off. She coloured, as if ashamed of being caught in an act of such frivolous amusement, and thought that Lord Welgrave must fancy her very trivial-minded; but he did nothing of the sort. The heart that could thus make its own pleasure, must, he argued, be unsullied by falsehood, unchilled by worldly precept. And who, to see Lillas in her brightest hours, would dream of the dark ones passed in solitude? How could Lord Welgrave, or her father, for that matter, guess that she had wept herself to sleep the night before, and would probably do the same again? Yet this girlish glee was not affectation, for she possessed the faculty, priceless and rare, of snatching, amidst tribulation, the pleasure presented at the moment.

She was all liveliness on this morning, making her sprightly friend seem dull by contrast; she mimicked Miss Magendie the elder so perfectly, that Ada declared she felt alarmed; and not less life-like were her imitations of stiff Lady Drury, and lisping Miss Caroline. She played and sung; she had Lion brought in to teach him his dancing steps, and made him go through the various tricks taught him in the happy school vacations. She recited a side-splitting piece of Hood's with imperturbable gravity; gave tragical extracts from Shakespeare, and melting quotations from Moore, and all without the least appearance of effort, but as if from an overflowing fund of hilarity; so that when Lord Welgrave quitted the Hall, he was absolutely intoxicated with surprise and rapture.

In the fulness of his admiration, when he met his friend Herbert Randal next day, he told him how Liliás had personated her governess in a ludicrously pompous speech, setting forth the social requirements of young ladies, how completely she individualised herself with Lady Macbeth, causing her hearers' blood almost to curdle—how from the most mirthful medleys of song, she had started to ballads pitifully touching, or martial airs that drowned smiles and tears in enthusiasm. Who could compare with her, the enamoured young man wanted to know.

"I won't gainsay that you are not likely in a hurry to meet a young lady possessing the varied accomplishments of Miss Bellamy," returned Mr. Randal; "still, for comparison, I don't think Miss Hartop suffers, though she would shrink from making such an exhibition of herself."

The Marquis of Welgrave was quoted amongst his companions for his good temper, but if ever man felt an inclination to knock down another, he felt thus at this moment towards his bosom friend. Liliás—*his* Liliás—that was the point—to be spoken of so disrespectfully; it was not to be calmly borne. The exact terms of his reply he didn't remember five minutes after, it was so rashly impulsive; and when his companion, seriously hurt, answered with a mingling of reproach and apology, he was sorry he had suffered himself to be so led away.

"I see," he said, "you did not know we were engaged."

"No; that alters the case materially. How should I hear it, except from yourself? When did you pop the question? I wonder she did not box your ears for your presumption. There is no calculating how many offers she has refused; everybody said she would be satisfied with nothing less than a prince of the blood."

"Now, Randal, no joking; the subject is not a light one."

"I should think not; few people find marriage a joke, though if you mean the box on the ear, her hand would come with a crushing weight, I fancy. I would give something to see her in a fury, provided I were not the cause; it would be like witnessing the rage of a tigress robbed of her young."

"You will see me in a fury instead," interrupted her lover. "Would you make Liliás out to be a vixen?"

Herbert vowed his innocence of such an intention, very humbly protesting he believed her, on the contrary, an angel.

"But," he added, with irrepressible mischief, "Milton tells of angels that were converted into demons, and will you deny that such transformations are possible in these days? Seriously, my dear fellow, have you not chained yourself with unnecessary expedition? I grant Miss Bellamy is beautiful, clever, and bewitching; but is she sincere? will she be constant? Nay, do not look like a

thundercloud ; I mean no imputation against her, and speak purely out of friendship, maybe unadvisedly, since you are already betrothed. Are you perfectly sure that she cares for you beyond her other admirers—your acquaintance has not been long ?”

“A month. Well, I allow it does seem rather a short time ; but then, under some circumstances, and with some people, a week will do more towards familiarising and developing characters than a year in other cases. You were always so cautious. By your own confession, you love Ada Hartop, and, though you won't say it, you think she likes you ; yet still you delay proposing. It would be a just punishment if some more adventurous gallant were to carry her off while you are ruminating upon your decision whether you will make yourself and her happy or miserable.”

“Old proverbs are often not considered fit for introduction,” said Herbert, with sententious gravity ; “but one particularly applicable occurs to my mind, cautioning people to take the measure of a distance before making a final spring.”

“You forget I have taken the leap,” laughed the other, with an effort to conquer his irritation, “and far from regretting it, I wish I could farther show my confidence in Lilius's amiability. Herbert, why is it you construe all her actions to her disfavour ? You are, perhaps, the only man living who could see anything to complain of in her.”

“Very possibly ; and, but for your sake, I might never have taken the trouble to sound the depths of her character ; for though, to be sure, no one could be altogether indifferent towards such a girl, from the first I preferred her friend. Miss Bellamy is too much of an actress for me.”

“You are referring to yesterday ; recollect no one was present except her father, Miss Hartop, and myself,” said Lord Welgrave, his anger reviving.

“No, I was not thinking of that just then ; yet, to my mind, a little reserve is becoming in a woman.”

“Our opinions upon this theme,” interposed the marquis, warmly, “are too widely dissimilar to admit of discussion, so do not let us commence one. What were you going to say ?”

“Really—I doubt whether I am right in speaking of it,” replied his friend, hesitatingly ; “I wouldn't, only you are certain to hear about it some time or other.”

“About what ! For Heaven's sake, Randal, don't play Iago with me ; I should make a true Othello. If you know anything concerning Lilius, it is cruelty to keep it back.”

“It may be so,” said Herbert, quietly ; “but do not excite yourself so terribly. I asked you just now if you were convinced of Miss Bellamy's affection ?”

"What greater surety can I have than her word?" returned his lordship, with a reluctance approaching the feminine. "Yes, I am convinced; her manner yesterday amply proved it."

"Then it can do no harm to inform you that there was rather an ugly report afloat last season—your being in Paris accounts for it not having reached you. She had just come out, and created a monstrous sensation, when somebody launched the scandal that——." And here he told the secret which Lady Drury and her daughter had contrived in one way or other to let everybody—who was anybody—into, when Lord Welgrave, as a first proceeding, declared that it was an infamous fabrication, concocted by a rejected suitor; his second, being to acknowledge that there might be a foundation, though an innocent one, for the story; and his third, to determine upon going instantly to the Hall.

His friend peremptorily caught him by the arm as he was tearing off to inquire the truth of Lilius, saying—

"There is no occasion for you to behave like a madman; the matter may admit of easy explanation; at any rate, it is too early for you to pay a visit yet, and you must suffer yourself to cool down a little. If you display this agitation at my unvarnished tale, what would you have done at hearing it the first time with all the amplifications that malice and ingenuity can weave? When one reasons upon it, it appears incredible that Sir Shenton shouldn't have known where she was."

"But the placards! the advertisements!" groaned Lord Welgrave, who, at this turn in his friend's mind, veered from stubborn disbelief to miserable uncertainty. "I must ask her to-day, or her father. Which would be best?"

"Herself, I should advise, considering the tie that exists between you; but be careful not to fall into a passion, or you may get the worst of it. Put the question to her straightforwardly, and, above all, don't allow any womanly trickery and evasion to serve for a direct answer, as the subject once laid aside can never be broached again. Resolve to have your mind at once and for ever set at rest."

CHAPTER XXIII.

little delay it was settled, to the satisfaction of all parties, that the baronet should return to the quietness of his study, and consign the young ladies to the charge of their respective adorers.

The Marquis of Welgrave felt alarmingly nervous as Lilius's pretty foot rested for an instant on his hand, before she gained the saddle; more nervous yet as Herbert and Ada, cantering on, left them *tête-à-tête*. She was in her gayest mood, making it more difficult to introduce the subject that pressed upon his mind, and not till her liveliness was checked, by perceiving the hopelessness of raising his spirits, did he dare to steer towards the goal. Women, accustomed to beat about topics often of no importance, invariably see through the artifice in the other sex, and Lilius, long before he came to the point, was prepared for it.

"Yes," she admitted, composedly, "it was true that she had left school secretly, and been nearly two months absent from home."

"Without your father knowing where to find you?" said Lord Welgrave, interrogatively, and with a slight sternness mingled with his eagerness.

She bent her head, and a rush of crimson mounted to the line of brow, visible beneath her hat.

Neither spoke for a little while; at length Lord Welgrave observed with a suppressed vehemence, that was more impressive than bubbling wrath:—"You have not treated me well, Lilius. You should not have suffered me to learn this from other lips than your own."

In a second the expression of shame faded from her face, and pride shone supreme in the light of her black eyes, and the curl of her lip.

"If you desire your freedom, my lord," she said, "pray do not consider yourself pledged to me—I shall not from this moment," and the head, lately bowed so lowly, was haughtily erected. There was, despite the self-command which had made her first words so ringingly clear, so defiantly cold, a quaver in her voice at the end, that appealed powerfully to Lord Welgrave's tenderness.

"Lilius! Lilius!" he cried, "do not be so unjust: far from having a wish to withdraw from my engagement, I would proclaim it by giving a denial to the slanders current. One question—but one, and I am satisfied. Is your father fully acquainted with your actions during those two months? Does he know where they were passed?"

She hesitated a moment, then returned faintly, "I explained all to him."

"That is sufficient," he exclaimed in a tone of joyous relief; "and now, dearest, smile forgiveness upon me for having entertained a doubt."

As he finished, Liliás's face, shaded by her drooping plume, was marked, by a tear, instead of a smile. Had they, been in a room, she must, in obedience to the prompting of conscience, have prostrated herself at his feet, confessed her unworthiness, and returned him his promise, not in wounded dignity, but at honour's call. On horseback, when sometimes they were beyond speaking distance, confession was more hard, so she stifled the saving impulse, and dashing aside the hallowed tear, turned towards him with a look of unreal happiness.

What trifles balance actions on which a life's weal may turn ! How different would have been Liliás's future had she, against all obstacles of place, opened her heart to her lover then ; but the opportunity gone by was not to be recalled.

At a bend of the road they came in view of their companions, who waited till they came up to point out the beauties of landscape, which but that very instant had been discovered ; they having before been engaged in a conversation more pleasurable to them than the finest sight-seeing in the world ; for Herbert, the cautious and cynical, loved the transparent nature of Ada Hartop in all sincerity, and listened to her platitudes with more attention than to the unfolding of Liliás's original mind.

"Is it really true, Liliás, that you are going to be married to that tall, grand-looking marquis ?" exclaimed Ada Hartop, rushing breathlessly into Miss Bellamy's boudoir the succeeding day. "It is impossible for me to realise it, though Sir Shenton told me so himself."

"Perfectly true," rejoined her friend, elevating her arched brows at the speaker's flurried aspect. "What surprises you in it ?"

"I can hardly tell, but it seems so strange. However, since it is a fact," the thoughtless girl resumed, "I suppose I ought to congratulate you, though I scarcely know how : for my part, I should be quite terrified at the idea of becoming a marchioness, and having a retinue of servants about me, and a host of new acquaintances to visit and entertain. How will you bear the weight of all these honours ?"

There was such an expression of profound perplexity, and even alarm, in Ada's pretty's face, that her companion could not repress a smile ; and instead of replying, she mischievously inquired, if the thought of being installed mistress over the household of the Hon. Herbert Randal was equally terrifying to her fancy.

Ada blushed brightly, from the pure brow to the limit of her bodice, saying with nervous haste :—"But he won't be so very rich, even when his father dies, for he has a number of sisters to

portion off, and perhaps may never keep a greater establishment than a country squire. The estates were deeply mortgaged in the late lord's time."

"You have been discussing ways and means already, I perceive," laughed Liliás.

"Indeed, now, you make a great mistake," pouted Ada, "he has never said a word that a friend might not: but you have not answered me yet."

"Oh, I am not in the least afraid," Liliás rejoined, confidently, and a sudden gleam gathered into her eyes as she spoke; "I shall not disgrace the position I am called to, you may be assured."

"No, that I am certain of," was the emphatic comment of Miss Hartop, who continued talking with deliberate thoughtfulness for some little time upon the subject, which she seemed as yet not properly to comprehend; then unexpectedly, and with a heightened colour, she put the somewhat embarrassing query, "Do you love him?"

"I like him very well," Miss Bellamy answered, with an affected lightness of tone.

"'Like him!' Is that all? O Liliás! if you do not love, never, never marry him."

She was interrupted by a low laugh, full of bitterness and scorn.

"Why not, Ada? Can you give me a reason, why what you call 'love' is indispensable in matrimony? Do not half, aye, more than half, the love matches end in misery? Do you think," continued she, slightly elevating her voice, and enunciating with savage energy, "that the professions of devotion made before marriage are followed up afterwards by fidelity and kindness? No, no. There is greater chance of peace in a marriage founded merely upon esteem, or even mutual convenience, than affection; as then, no exaggerated hopes are crushed, no idolatrous passion thrown back upon the seared heart with contempt. In the jog-trot, every-day union, the husband may neglect his wife, and devote himself to another, without her experiencing the exquisite anguish, the incurable degradation, which would rend her bosom if she loved him."

Abruptly Liliás ceased, and hiding her face in her open palms, gave way to her excited feelings. Ada stood by her side with a scared look, not venturing for many minutes to speak, but finally remarked, with a deprecating gesture:

"Consider, dear Liliás, Lord Welgrave loves you very much, and what misery you will inflict upon him if you marry with your heart untouched. He will surely discover, some day, that you do not care for him."

"You take everything for what it appears, Ada," put in Liliás,

scoffingly. "All men play the same farce, speak the same honeyed words, smile the same false smiles. Ah! they are all alike—all traitors."

"Lilias, you surely do not mean this. Lord Welgrave is, I am convinced, all honour; and unless you can succeed in making yourself regard him more, you ought to give him up. Perhaps you will meet with some one you cannot help loving when you are married, and regret it then. Would not that be horrible?"

"I never shall regret it—on that account, at least. I feel that for me to love is impossible; so, Ada, set your mind at rest upon that point, and do not be so romantic. Would you have me as madly enamoured as the heroines in old novels are described to be? I am no victim to a parent's necessities or a guardian's tyranny. I do this of my own freewill, and if I do not fall into ecstasies at the thought of becoming Lord Welgrave's wife"—a shudder seized her as she uttered the words—"I do not hate him, nor intend to defy his power to make me love him, and submit to his will, as those renowned damsels' rule is to do. Then, why your earnest prayer that I should withdraw my word? Ridiculous! I cannot, nor will not; my honour is at stake, and my safety."

The last words were muttered to herself, as though to give her courage to prosecute the course she had chosen; and as she concluded, without waiting for another word, she left the room, unmindful of her friend's entreaty to return, and say, that she was not vexed with her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FINAL ADIEU.

"HAVE you called at the post-office to-day, Emma?" asked Lilias of her maid, some hours after the strange conversation she had with Ada.

Her maid, who was dressing her mistress's hair, made answer in the affirmative; adding, in a subdued tone, as if fearful of being overheard, "There was no letter."

"Indeed!" her mistress muttered half aloud; "Owen's conduct is most singular. What does his silence forbode?"

Emma made some farther observation to the effect that there might be a letter before night; but Miss Bellamy was too much occupied in her musings to heed what she said, and Emma's remark went unanswered.

At this juncture a servant knocked at the door. The girl hastened to obey the summons, returning with a small waiter, upon which lay a card, inscribed with the name of Owen Arnold.

At this seeming response to her fears, Liliás uttered a faint scream of dismay, then appealing to her attendant, bade her tell the footman she would wait upon Mr. Arnold immediately; "or rather," she said, correcting her message, "show him into my boudoir, and in a few moments I will join him. Emma, be quick!" she cried, with the hurry of excitement, as the man disappeared upon his mission; "here, give me that dress!" pointing to one of a heap that rested upon a chair.

Emma's looks expressed nothing short of horror, as she listened to this request; she seemed to fancy her mistress was going crazy—the dress Liliás pointed to was a dark walking robe—but did not quite like to say what she thought, although she gave an ejaculation expressive of surprise, and in a corrective tone, said—"Miss Liliás surely does not mean to wear that; will you not prefer this rose-coloured cashmere?"

"Anything," was her mistress's careless response, "only do not dawdle so over it. Come, fasten this bracelet, and give me my handkerchief! there, don't scent it with patchoulie—I hate it! let me have lavender, rather. Can I go now?" she concluded with increased impatience, as Emma's nimble fingers secured the last fastening of her robe, and turned to the door that communicated with the boudoir.

"Oh, wait a moment—you have disarranged your hair," the girl cried after her, plaintively; but her mistress was out of hearing, having already passed through the door which separated her from the presence of her injured lover.

Owen Arnold was standing near the window, gazing mournfully at the bleak picture of barrenness around the Hall; so like what it had been some sixteen months ago, when he had visited it, and obtained the promise from its mistress which she had since violated. His countenance was ashy pale; his eyes were wild in their unwonted brightness, and his manner altogether indicative of a fearful struggle between the contending sentiments of love and disappointment. Liliás, who seldom yielded to fear of any kind, now quailed before his glance, so reproachfully stern was it. She had proposed in her own mind to offer him the hand of friendship; to chat with him about indifferent matters, avoiding, if possible, a recurrence to the past, which of all things she most dreaded. But she saw this was not to be; that crimination, reproach, and questioning, were reserved for her, and she trembled in anticipation. The heartless words of welcome she had prepared to greet him with remained unsaid, and in the presence of this man, before whom she desired above all others to be cold, resolute, and self-possessed, she stood like a guilty self-condemned creature.

"Miss Bellamy," Owen said, when he had acknowledged her

entrance by a silent bow, and trying vainly to steady his voice, and expunge from it any lingering tenderness, "after the letter I received from you, my visit here may seem an intrusion, but upon one point your communication was not satisfactory. You told me that you had promised yourself to another, without saying that you loved that other. Do you?"

Owen's tones were broken and faint as he concluded, and a groan,—wrung from him in the depths of his despair, followed his speech. When asked by Ada the like question, it had been comparatively easy to answer by an evasion; but now, when appealed to in accents so solemn, the truth imperatively forced itself from her, and hardly knowing what she did, she gasped out the word, "No."

The face of her lover, before very pale, became livid.

"My God!" he exclaimed, "I feared this; she is unworthy of true affection!" Then addressing himself to Miss Bellamy—who continued standing, her white, troubled face half shaded in the growing twilight, and her hands feebly pulling at her sleeve—in the excess of her perturbation—he resumed: "Lilias, why have you thus deceived me, and consented to bestow your hand upon one you do not care for? I will not, of course, do anything to deter the prosecution of your union, if you are bent upon it; but before it is too late, I ask you to pause. I love you, Lilias, unselfishly and deeply, and for ever must you be dearer to my heart than all the world holds. Yet, believe me, if I thought you could be happy in your choice, I would stifle my own regrets in rejoicings on your account, for the strongest desire of my life is to see you blest. That no good can come of this ill-advised contract is most certain—ought begun in wrong must end in misery. You will act more kindly by your accepted husband in telling him candidly now that you have no regard for him, than by suffering him by degrees to learn the hateful truth."

"Stay—stay!" his hearer cried, pitifully; "I must do it, and I entreat you not to make the task more difficult."

"You must!" Owen reiterated, amazedly; "what do your

the tenderness of a parent; her grief tortured him more than his own, and defied his struggles for composure.

"Do not imagine," he said, "that I desire to triumph over you, and ask out of vanity; but, Liliás, answer me this: If you were not guided by circumstances, of which I am ignorant, would you have broken your faith thus? Would you marry another and reject me?"

Miss Bellamy's frame was literally convulsed with agitation. Her arms extended themselves above her head, and upon her face there was imprinted a look of unearthly desolation, as with frantic vehemence she broke forth:—"No, no; I would not marry him if I were not compelled to do so; and if it is any comfort to you to learn that I love you better, far better, than I ever can any one again, the humiliation of the confession may be deemed some expiation of my fault; but, for mercy's sake, do not exercise your power; be generous, and cease to tempt me to do what would be my ruin. Henceforth our paths must be widely asunder—leave me to the torments of my lot."

The cruel intensity of feeling displayed in her manner alarmed Owen, who continued in silence to contemplate the woful change wrought in her countenance.

"Liliás," he murmured, after a while, and there was a melting pathos in his voice that subdued at once her stony immobility, and brought tears to her burning eyes, "I will not reproach you with making my happiness a sacrifice to your false notions of honour, nor will I longer attempt to dissuade you from the commission of the rash step you contemplate, since you are predetermined not to listen to any argument against it; but before I go, never, perhaps, to behold you again, allow me to fancy myself your brother as of old."

Liliás trembled violently, and her face flushed up suddenly; she, however, offered no resistance as Owen's arm encircled her waist, and his lips pressed hers with a love that was stronger than friendship. A giddiness came over her, which threatened to end in a total privation of sense, and her hand lay in his feverish clasp, cold and passive.

A few moments elapsed before she recovered herself, and looked around, to find that she was alone. Owen's agony of mind had been too great to sustain longer, and he had rushed from the room, maddened with grief, after giving a final look at the beautiful traitress, whose falsehood had shorn his life of all hope.

Away he sped from the Hall to the grounds, and from thence to the village, when recklessly flinging himself into the compartment of a train just about to start, the destination of which he did not even inquire, he was driven far away from the scene of, at once, his greatest pleasure and pain.

In a condition terrible to behold, Liliás, when she found that Owen was gone, prostrated herself upon a couch quivering with pain.

"Gracious God!" she cried wildly; "I love him—I love him. For this man, from whom I have eternally severed myself, I feel the strongest affection, and for him who is to be my husband, an abhorrence amounting to loathing. Heaven help me! I know not what to do. Must I listen to this new-born passion? recal Owen, and so further perjure my soul by breaking my vow to Lord Welgrave, or by keeping faith with him, annihilate the happiness of the one dearest to me, as well as my own?"

Who could say what a world of anguish filled the heart Lilies of as, following this ebullition of ungovernable grief, she constrained herself to silence, while she endeavoured to think what she should do? As well might she have hoped to unravel mysteries hidden in the tomb, as the tangled web of her thoughts; they bade defiance to every effort she was capable of making to arrange them, and wandered hither and thither with maddening celerity, refusing all obedience to her will.

It is said, that in dying memory will faithfully recal, not only circumstances long since forgotten, but every thought and transaction of life, whether it be good or evil, important or trivial; and sometimes, too, when the essence of existence is yet strong within us, will remembrance be as active as in the dying hour. Moments there are, whose bitterness surpasses even that of death; when recollection, strained to its fullest tension, will heap its burden on the aching brain, remorseless of the pangs it inflicts.

It was now such a moment as this with Lilies; scenes of the far-off time were brought up one by one to her mind; words heard and spoken in her childhood, and actions long buried in oblivion, came back with wonderful distinctness in this period of her misery, augmenting the sum of her distress. Unpitied conscience, mirrored to her, in this dread hour, the innocence and contentment of childhood, in painful contrast to the ceaseless turbulency and wretchedness of the present; while time, with his mellowing touch, lent to every by-gone picture a beauty not strictly its own, thus casting a gloom still more impenetrable upon the passing instant.

At length, nearly distracted with remorse, and by the awful consciousness that her woe was the consequence of her own deed, the unhappy girl hastened from the boudoir to the garden, hoping to divert by physical motion the excessive poignancy of her sorrows.

The keen winter air, playing around her fevered brow, afforded a most exhilarating relief from the heated atmosphere of the house; yet neither this nor the rapid action could remove, for a single instant the terrors of a soul governed by such mighty and contrary passions. Swiftly her lithe figure, borne along by excitement, passed under the grey shadow of the sycamore boughs, then, with shortened breath, she paused.

A step, light as Liliás's own, had followed her from the Hall, and now, beneath the pall-like avenue, Emma Adams joined her. She held in her hand a shawl, which she had brought to shield her mistress from the fierce eastern gale, which, sweeping through the drooping shrubbery, and along the leaf-strewn path, sounded like a funeral dirge, chanted by lost spirits over their blighted hopes.

Miss Bellamy was in no mood for conversation, and, at sight of her maid, quickly diverged from the avenue into a narrow walk, intersected with thick underwood and hardy holly bushes, bordering the fish-pond. Here again she stopped, and with a fascinated aspect gazed into the pool, which, on this dreary February evening, looked quiet and peaceful enough to tempt the weary restless soul to find repose under its placid surface.

As she stood there, spell-bound by an unaccountable attraction to the water's gloomy depths, Emma appeared at her side, panting with eagerness to speak, but rendered incapable of articulation from the speed she had been making, and the fright she laboured under, lest Liliás had been led to the pond with a fatal intention. Directly she came up, she clutched hold of her dress, nervously fearful of letting go her grasp.

"For Heaven's sake, think, my dear mistress!" she cried, when she had recovered utterance; "remember your father."

Liliás turned sharply upon her, and there was something weird-like and spectral in her attitude, as dimly seen through the surrounding gloom. Her eyes, lit up with overwrought emotion, gleamed like stars, and her voice, breaking upon stillness so profound, was almost unearthly.

"Fear me not, girl," she said, "whatever may befall, I will not take my life. God can tell," she continued, while the acuteness of her despair proclaimed itself in her set face, white as the hoar frost that lay around, "I have nothing to make it worth the keeping; still however unendurable existence may be, I will not voluntarily deprive myself of my wretched breath, unless indeed——"

She did not conclude the sentence, but with a plaintive wail, such as the stricken deer would give when hunted to the death, sank upon the ground, amidst the tangled briars of rushes.

"One touch of nature," says the poet, "makes the whole world kin." Emma Adams, the waiting woman, dared more than she had ever done before with her imperious mistress, when she slid her arm round her waist, and drew down the weary head upon her breast; and Liliás, instead of drawing herself up with freezing disdain, was content to break the barrier of station for the comfort of a pitying word.

"Are you sorry for me, Emma?" she moaned feebly, from out her sobs; then, ere the girl could make her timid response heard,

she raised her head with a quick jerk, saying in an accent of mocking desolation:—"But no, sympathy is to take part in, and what share can any one have in my griefs? I must now, and ever bear them alone."

CHAPTER XXV.

MARRIED.

EVERYTHING was in forward preparation for Lilius's marriage with the Marquis of Welgrave, and, but for the despairing face of the bride elect, and the occasional repinings of Sir Shenton, that his favourite Owen Arnold was not the successful suitor, all seemed as bright and auspicious as is usual upon similar occurrences. The happy bridegroom, the soul of generosity, would willingly have settled every moiety of his vast possessions upon his fair chosen. He was all affability to everybody, in perfect raptures with his future father-in-law, and even willing to endure Lilius's sleek maid, for whom he nourished a secret distrust. In his superabundant felicity he never heeded that the manner of his betrothed, despite her assiduous efforts at warmth, was chillingly frigid, and that instead of the joyous embarrassment one expects to be exhibited by young ladies, when the subjects of bridesmaids, *trousseaux*, and settlements are in discussion, an ill-disguised dread, and nervous desire to appear happy, struggled vainly in her bearing, with an overweening hate to every person and thing connected with the fast-approaching ceremony.

For a woman of her impulsive nature, the task of complacency under the burthen of contending regret for the past, and fear for the future, was more than difficult, it was absolutely unattainable, and at times her melancholy reveries, or wild bursts of unquenchable regret, would cause her doting parent great surprise and sorrow. He could not doubt, from what he at intervals was witness to, that something was greatly wrong with his daughter, but what that was he harassed himself fruitlessly to conjecture: frequently he would implore Lilius, with all the eloquence of sincere affection, to confide in him, and make known the cause of her incomprehensible behaviour.

"If you do not wish to marry Lord Welgrave," he would say, "you shall not, even though you stood together at the altar. He is so purely honourable, he will, I am convinced, release you from your promise, if you desire it."

Still Miss Bellamy's answer to her parent's appeal was, "No, no; I will marry him: my choice is made; I cannot and will not alter it."

With characteristic impetuosity Lord Welgrave had declared he could not exist till May—the month suggested by the baronet as a suitable one for the marriage—without Liliás being his constant companion; and as she made no very strong objection, submitting with a despairing compliance to his petition, that the wedding might take place in the beginning of March, it was agreed upon, that in that blustering month Miss Bellamy should change name and home, and become Lord Welgrave's wife.

February quickly passed by, and the first of March, cold and wet as a winter's day, brought nearer the desire of the expectant bridegroom.

After a little resistance on the part of Liliás, and a great deal of argument on that of her lover's, expressed more by the eye than the tongue, it was finally decided, that the important and interesting event should come off upon the second of the month; so that from the dawning of that gloomy first of March, Liliás had but a few hours left of her single unfettered life.

The day she spent mostly with her father, less in conversation than in quiet sorrow. The time had indeed come, when that fond parental care must be exchanged for the unproved solicitude or neglect of a husband, and Liliás felt the prospective change most acutely.

Sir Shenton, while he strove to uphold the depressed hopes of his daughter, was almost crushed by the weight of his own sorrow. Liliás had been from her birth, and still continued to be, his all. Zealous friends he had in plenty, friends truer than many men own; but the heart craves for more than friendship, and no wife had he to cheer and share his solitude, no second child to fill up the gap the absence of Liliás would make in his breast. When deserted by her he would be truly alone. These thoughts oppressed him grievously, making his attempt at consolation worse than vain.

They did not part till late, each to repair to an uneasy couch. For Liliás, indeed, there could be no rest that night. First she employed herself in walking up and down the chamber, thinking with sickening terror of the morrow, when, passing noiselessly from her sleeping room to the boudoir, she proceeded to the end of her

its contents. First came forth a packet of letters, which she read over intently, one after another. "Why did I not destroy these?" she murmured, "which, if found, may be the means of my undoing. What weakness is it constrains me to keep these letters, once so fondly loved, now so hateful to my sight? Yet I cannot give them up; a something, undefinable even to myself, influences me to preserve them, and I feel that I must obey the impulse. And this too, merciful Providence," she mourned aloud, "with what different feelings have I viewed this!"

As she spoke, with nervous haste she snatched from its covering a small piece of paper, folded very tightly, which, when unwrapped, revealed lines of writing and printing intermingled confusedly together. The ink was fresh still, though the paper was crumpled, and in one part singed, as if it had been in danger of being burnt. Within its folds was a ring and a lock of hair—a small curl of chestnut brown hair—that twined itself lovingly around the taper fingers of Miss Bellamy, who, with a half-reluctant, half-caressing touch, twisted it about in her hand.

For a very long time did this incongruous treasure occupy her attention; now with angry gestures she perused one of the letters, and then, her wrath changing into regret or fondness, she would dwell with passionate ecstasy upon every word it contained. At length she removed these mementos of the past, and with disordered step continued to pace the room, till streaks of pale light made their way into it. Even then she felt no inclination for repose, and opening the window, through which a chilly blast issued, bared her fair head to the cutting wind. She appeared to take a morbid pleasure in tormenting herself, and by continual bewailings of her condition, tried to make it more unendurable.

Necessity compelled her to abide by her promise to Lord Welgrave, and relinquish her suddenly conceived attachment for Owen Arnold; but she was not the less likely on this account to bemoan the loss of him she had too late learned to love, and submit without repining to the lot which compelled her to give her hand where her affections were not placed. If the young marquis—her future husband—could have seen the pallid, despairing face of his

chofy Lillas had engendered during the lonely hours of the night, by her gloomy employment of retrospection, had now assumed a settled hopelessness, intermingled with a resolute determination, that made her delicate lineaments immoveably stern and cold.

About eleven o'clock they set off, the statue-like bride, her father, and the bridesmaids, amongst whom numbered Ada Harstep and two pretty, but inanimate, cousins of his lordship. The guests were very numerous, and included, not merely the chief gentry of the county, but friends of Lord Welgrave and the baronet from a hundred miles distant. There were cousins of the bride, ten times removed, and never seen till now. A brother of the marquis, the offspring of his mother's second marriage, handsomer and gayer than he, but so reckless, extravagant, and selfish that little affection subsisted between them, and the invitation had been sent him chiefly out of compliment. He scrutinised Lillas impertinently through his eye-glass, and condescended to say she was the finest girl, he believed, by Jove, he had ever seen; for which freedom of speech he came in for a severe censure from his aunt, Lady Christabel.

Lady Christabel was a maiden sister of the wild earl's father, who had the discernment to prefer the graver character of the Marquis of Welgrave to that of his rattling half-brother, and invariably called him her nephew. She was a charming old lady, so unaffected in manner, so genial of heart, and worth, as a companion, all the encyclopedias of general knowledge that ever have been or will be compiled. If you wished to arrive at the genealogy of any noble family, she could give you their whole pedigree from the Conquest. Did memory prove wanting in the name of an artist or author, statesman or divine, she would supply the deficiency with equal readiness; and for anecdotes of wits and belles, what a marvellous store she possessed! In a few moments she would sketch the personal and moral characteristics of all the celebrities and beauties who had illumined her own not insignificant reign; for Lady Christabel's charms and acquirements had won her what may almost be termed fame. But, ye immortal gods and goddesses, Cupid and Hymen, Venus and the Graces, pardon me for venturing to bestow a thought upon other than the queen of the festival (the bride) who for one little day's supremacy must give a life's service, resigning, in some cases, the sceptre for the broom.

Of course, the bride of this day's rejoicings was proclaimed by all unsurpassably lovely, and, though this was really beyond the cavil even of Lady Drury and her daughter—who had so contrived that not to invite them would have been a positive insult—Lillas was by no means a fitting representative of the blushing, fluttering candidate of matrimony. She looked as indifferent to all surround-

ing objects as a sleep-walker, or a person against whom some severe and irrevocable sentence is recorded, and who, under the cloak of resignation, seeks to escape the torturing minutiae preparatory to the fulfilment of the sacrifice. Her sunken eyes glistened with an unnatural lustre, and on her cheek, pale still from the night's vigil, burnt a bright hectic spot, making her lips sickly by contrast.

At the village church the party was met by the bridegroom, and his first man, the Honourable Herbert Randal. They both looked radiantly happy, particularly Lord Welgrave, in whose manner might be discerned a shade of agitation, but no misgiving; his aspect betokened supreme faith in, and love for, his future wife. His smile, always expressive of heartfelt pleasure, now more than common, displayed the delight of his soul; and it was with the fullest confidence in the felicity of the future that he stood at the altar, his hand clasped in that of the woman who had spent the whole night in regretting the fate which linked her to him, and who, at the very moment his glance was bent upon her with ineffable tenderness, cherished a loathing of her marriage, and a consequent dislike to him.

What a terrible trial it must have been to her dominant, self-willed spirit, to be compelled, with outward complacency, to utter words which must for ever bind her to one man, while her heart was in the possession of another!

Soon, and before she was at all conscious of it, she was the Marquis of Welgrave's wife, and, as such, was led by him from the rustic porch to the crowded road, where troops of eager faces were huddled together, expressive of but one desire, that of beholding the bride, who leant upon her husband's arm like a dead weight. The feverish fire of her eye, the glow upon her cheek, had again departed, leaving her white, silent, and expressionless as a statue, save for the harsh, fixed setting of the perfectly moulded lips.

An incident, in itself of a trifling nature, but which to the heated brain of Liliás showed full of horrible import, occurred as the bridal pair were entering the carriage. A funeral bier passed them to the burying-ground, closely followed by its weeping group of mourners, whose black garments swept her snowy robe. Possessed of no sanguine expectations or fond emotions, it would seem that, upon the bride's heavy heart, this gloomy spectacle could add no new uneasiness: but it was otherwise. Seldom is wretchedness so complete as to be incapable of increase; and Liliás, though she had fancied nothing could augment the sum of her miseries received this circumstance as a farther omen of ill, believing, in the bitter desolation of her spirit, that the future held out to her simply retribution, as the past offered nought but repentance.

The *déjeuner* passed off much after the accustomed fashion of such things. Sir Shenton—rather incoherently, it must be admitted, for his emotion all but overpowered him—proposed the health of the bride and bridegroom, expressing, in no measured terms, his conviction of the latter's worthiness, and the former's felicity; to which his son-in-law, as in duty bound, responded with wonderful calmness, considering the momentousness of the trial. Then up rose Herbert Randal to pledge, at the conclusion of a neat little speech that included the good wishes of the whole company, "the bridesmaids," which, being accompanied by a glance of fond meaning at Ada, was a trifle embarrassing to her, though none the less agreeable.

No sooner were the chinkling glasses steady again, than the bridegroom had to reply as the mouthpiece of the bridesmaids. One voice amongst the buzz of congratulations was deplorably missed, at least by Sir Shenton and Liliás, and that voice was Doctor Darby's. Much to his own grief was the physician compelled through illness to absent himself from the wedding, but he had written his compliments to the bride on the gladsome event.

It was soon time for Liliás to withdraw for the purpose of preparing for the bridal tour, Miss Hartop following, so that their farewell might take place privately. The countenance of this young lady was certainly more suitable for a bride's than Liliás's, for it was truly an April one, bathed one moment in painless tears, the next wreathed in smiles, alternating with bright blushes. It is impossible to suppose a nature more open than Ada's; and now, when she was going to separate from her girlhood's companion and friend, she could not do other than impart the only secret in her keeping, which had, in truth, been non-existent some half hour before. It was this: spoken amidst much hesitation—Herbert Randal had told her, what in her heart she had long been convinced of, that he loved her, expressing simultaneously a wish that at an early period, she should officiate as bride in a marriage where he should play the part of bridegroom.

Ada's brief recital being concluded, she remained for some few moments in deep thought, a thing, by-the-bye, not very common with her. Presently she forsook her musing, and, resting her hand upon the shoulder of the bride, who was standing before a cheval-glass in her dressing-room, peered into the lovely and suffering face with a wistful earnestness of gaze.

"Do you remember, dear," Ada finally observed, speaking with slow distinctness, "I once said I could never love anybody better than yourself, and that I feared you regarded some one more than me. It was the night before you went away. How often have I since thought of it. Was I right in thus supposing?"

It will be some comfort to hear you say so, because, although I cannot help liking Herbert better even than you, I blame myself for it. It seems to me as if I were acting wrongly in preferring another, after my assurance that I should ever esteem you dearer than all the world."

As the face of Lilius was turned away, Ada could not perceive the vivid change that passed over it at this allusion to her departure from Blackheath; but from the nervous shudder that shook her frame, and the profound silence she maintained, Miss Hartop presumed, either that her words must have had a great effect upon her friend, or that she was taken suddenly indisposed, so she gently added:—"If my question distressed you, do not answer it; I am very sorry that I mentioned anything connected in the remotest manner with your strange disappearance from school; and yet," continued she, warmly, "why should this mystery exist between us? Dear, dear Lilius, tell me, not only that you will forgive me if I have offended you, but that you do not esteem me unworthy of your confidence. I know, from chance observations made by your father, that you did not return home for nearly two months, though never learned where you stayed during that time."

Lilius reared up her tall form with a proud gesture of defiance.

"Why should you conceive anything so ridiculous," she said impatiently, "as that I desire to make a mystery of my abrupt departure from Clardon House, and my subsequent seclusion from every one, including, as you rightly suppose, my father? Had you ever asked me for an account of my actions, which indeed no one has a right to do, I would have given the simple solution that I now offer to this *great secret*. I was ill, and could not travel, nor write to inform my friends of my whereabouts, which accident, not design, concealed. For your other questions," she said, her tone imperceptibly softening till it became almost plaintive, "be satisfied with this answer, I love you now most fondly; and that I stand but second in your affections, can never alienate my attachment from you. I regard you as a sister—a dear, kind sister, whose sympathy I can ever rely upon."

The concluding portion of Lilius's speech was lost in sobs, and, in a sudden and violent gust of sorrow, she threw herself upon the bosom of her friend.

"Oh, Ada, Ada," she cried wildly, without appearing conscious of what she said, "I could trust you—if I dare. I have no

of his life. To whom, then, can I turn for consolation in my trouble? To you, my sweet guileless friend? No, no! I must not disclose to you the wreck buried here," frantically striking her breast as she spoke; "or even *your* affection would be denied me."

Ada listened affrightedly to this strange confession, that, following so closely upon Lilius's disavowal of any secret, mystified as much as it alarmed her. This was one of those fits of weakness, to which even the strongest-minded and most self-reliant women are at times subject, upon whose souls lie the weight of a concealment. Accustomed, as they are, to depend upon the judgment of father or husband, the task of thinking and acting for themselves becomes so laborious, that they are apt to sink beneath the load of anxiety, and thoughtlessly repose their confidence upon the nearest person. But only with the feeblest does this mental and bodily prostration long continue, and then comes the return of cautious acting, in which a woman only can truly excel.

In less than five minutes, Lilius had removed all traces of unwonted agitation in her aspect and, dignifiedly collected, stood beside her toilet, toying carelessly with the scattered trinkets, and conversing on an indifferent topic, she had, with admirable address, introduced, before Ada could recover herself enough to articulate a word. Miss Hartop's amazement was the more increased, because she saw the graceful ease of the haughty bride was assumed; that, however calmly she might discourse, the false brightness of her eyes, and the nervous quickness with which she moved her hands, never permitting them an instant's repose, proved her recent excitement to have been real, and her present complacency a mere effort of the will.

After many attempts to speak, during the slight pauses of Lilius's rattling commentary, Ada eventually succeeded in gaining her attention, and, with earnest entreaty, implored she would unburthen herself of aught that oppressed her, trusting to the warmth and sympathy of her regard to insure her the consolation she needed.

Miss Hartop's manner was so impressive, so touchingly sympathetic, that Lilius could no longer keep up the appearance of cheerfulness, and was content to cast aside her disguise. But it was no part of her plan—now she was in full possession of her reasoning powers—to join another confidant to the list, already comprising her nurse, her maid, and Doctor Darby.

If not one of this trio knew all her secrets, they were each acquainted with sufficient to enable them to become most formidable enemies. Of her nurse she could entertain no alarm, neither did she doubt the secrecy of the friendly physician; but she was often

dubious of Emma's faithfulness to the trust reposed in her; and she conceived that to add to the number of her confidants would increase her cares.

She took therefore the only measure open to her, that of enjoining Ada to silence upon the subject of her unhappiness, extracting likewise a promise from her not to revert to it again. "Betrayed as I have been," said she, "to reveal that I am oppressed by secret cares, it is folly in me to use farther reserve with you. I am miserable, most miserable sometimes, and should you upon any occasion hear strange words pass my lips, expressive of my torments, do not question, nor wonder, but bear with me patiently and silently; and if you can, forget what has passed between us. I cannot, I repeat, I dare not, harass your young life with my sorrows, so do not seek to penetrate my concealment. Let me be assured of your pity and your prudent guardianship of what I have made known to you, and it will be a means of alleviating the distress that preys upon my heart."

Mechanically Ada promised all that was required of her, and waited in silence till Emma had invested her mistress in her travelling attire, when, hand in hand, the friends proceeded down stairs, without exchanging another syllable relative to the subject of their late conversation.

They found the carriage drawn up to the door, and the hall filled with the guests, anxious not to lose the last glimpse of the bride.

The adieux were somewhat hurried, for Lilius—drawn out of the stony impassibility which had enveloped her during the last few hours—was too greatly agitated to make it prudent to linger over the farewell greetings.

A kind good-bye she gave to each, and more particularly to her weeping young friend; last of all she embraced her father, that idolised father, who had no thought but for her, no delight save in her well-being. Superhuman was the mastery she maintained over her feelings in those trying moments, to keep back the tears that rushed to her eyes, and the sobs that rent her breast almost to bursting. No word could she utter, and when Sir Shenton at length tore himself from her convulsive grasp, and led her to the carriage, she looked far more like a corpse than a bride.

Lord Welgrave, getting in after her, turned from the lingering congratulations and good wishes of his friends, to his wife, grieved and surprised at the excess of her perturbation. The door was closed, the coachman smacked his whip, and the carriage rolled away followed by eager eyes.

SCANDINAVIAN BALLAD POETRY*

TRANSLATION, as we all know, is one of the most thankless tasks to which a literary man can set himself. Especially is this the case in these days when our admirable British Philistine is beginning to question the correctness of his old belief, that his race was at the very head of the nations of the earth in all matters of education and intelligence; and when he is, by mere force of example, being shamed into learning a little of the language, and literature, and popular notions of neighbouring peoples. A reader whose acquaintance with the language of a foreign country is even of the most cursory or superficial kind, is apt to be displeased with the most faithful translations from it; he recognises in its simplest ballads, though he should have painfully spelled them out with the aid of a dictionary, a choice simplicity of phrase and a direct, naked, convincing force which, somehow, seem to vanish from the most carefully written translations. Goethe, or Heine or Beranger in English, is simply irritating to him who has read the poet in the original; and surely these three writers have had plenty of translators. The practical difficulty caused by the necessity of rhyme we consider but a small matter; and, indeed, incline to the belief that to translate perfectly into English a poem from any foreign language, requires poetical powers as great as those which produced the original poem, with an amount of labour infinitely greater than that at first expended upon it. Everybody considers himself an infallible critic of translations. Everybody believes that he could himself have done the work better. The finest and most valuable translations are received coldly; involving profound study and great labour, they add little to the writer's reputation; and when a man proves himself to be an able and accomplished translator, we generally repay him by beginning to distrust his power to do anything else.

The case is somewhat different when an English writer not only translates from a language which is comparatively little studied, but also expends labour and research in discovering and revealing to us a mine of literary wealth of the existence of which we knew but vaguely. Herein lies the difference between Mr. Tom Taylor's

and poems which Villemarque, with that admirable patience and special knowledge which had gained him an European reputation, had gathered from the rude villagers of Morbihan and Finisterre. Mr. Buchanan has collected and translated direct from the Norwegian and Danish a series of ballads, very few of which have hitherto been placed before us, except in more or less diluted German renderings. A mere glance through the volume shows that, for a man of Mr. Buchanan's impulsive powers, the task must have been a tedious and trying one; and, indeed, so very minute is the "touch" in some of these verses—so peculiar and pointed are little and insignificant phrases which a more hasty writer would have been tempted to rattle over with one of those careless platitudes of verse making which are the special abomination in most translations—that we can well understand how only a very strong liking for the subjects of these ballads could have prompted the work. Here, however, we have the work done; and there but remains to consider its value. In doing so, we shall briefly speak, in the first place, of those few modern ballads which Mr. Buchanan has placed in his volume.

These are for the most part easily distinguishable. They want the fine garrulous simplicity, the unconsciousness of effort, and quaintness of expression of the old ballads. They are too beautiful; too artistic and well-proportioned; they suggest the writer and make one admire his skill. Looking at the general character of the ballads which Mr. Buchanan has chosen to translate—which are chiefly of a quiet and sentimental caste—we should have thought that imitations of them would be of comparatively easy manufacture; and yet the modern ballads are as clearly distinct from their fellows as are those spurious Scotch ballads which have from time to time been thrust into collections. In this walk of literature those reproductions of the antique which have been successful in imposing upon the credulous, have generally been of an insignificant kind—of a kind which evaded detection by avoiding any dangerously powerful theme or trying situation. In these modern Scandinavian ballads, however, there seems to be no attempt at imposture. Beyond the mere adopting of the form and style of the antique the writer does not seek to go; and is content to produce in that form a poem which shall have some ancient story-telling force and vividness, graced with much modern literary finish. Of this sort is Oehlenschläger's "Agnes," in which the subject, as well as form, has been borrowed from an old ballad. The story of Agnes is a very pathetic one, and turns up under various guises, in the ballad-literature of nearly all European countries. Maid Agnes, as we are told, was one day sitting upon the sea-shore, when there arose

out of the waves a merman. The description of the merman in Oehlenschläger's version is decidedly modern,—

"He was clad unto the waist
With scales like silver white,
And on his breast the setting sun
Put rosy gleams of light.

The merman's spear a boat-mast was,
With crook of coral brown;
The shield was made of turtle shell;
Of mussel shells his crown.

His hair upon his shoulders fell,
Of bright and glittering tang;
And sweeter than the nightingale's,
Sounded the song he sang."

He persuades Maid Agnes to become his wife, and she descends with him to his sea cave. Here she lives happily with him eight years, and bears him seven children. One day she hears church bells ringing, and beseeches him to let her go upon the land that she may say her prayers in church; and he consents, urging her to return in twenty-four hours. She goes up the strand, and enters the church—

"The kirk bells chime, and into kirk,
And up the aisle she flies;
*The images upon the walls
Are turning away their eyes."*

She tries to pray, and cannot; she spills the holy wine upon the ground in attempting to take the chalice. Oppressed by the consciousness of her sin, she wanders down again to the sea shore, praying Heaven to take her life. She lies down upon the sand, and there dies; a little herd-boy, who finds the corpse, digging her grave and putting a stone upon it. And the people say that the merman comes every morning and evening to weep for his lost wife, because every morning and evening the shore upon her grave is found to be wet. This beautiful story will at once recal to the reader's mind Leyden's "Mermaid," which has an almost similar subject. In Leyden's poem—which, as a poem, is vastly superior in power and feeling to the Danish ballad—the characters, however, are reversed, and it is a mermaid who forces the Chief of Colonsay to descend with her into the sea, and by her singing entices him to become her husband. He, however, remains faithful to his love; and the mermaid permits him once more to re-visit land, on condition that he will return to plight his troth to her. The Chief of Colonsay, resorting to a petty quibble, declares that

when he returns he will be true to her ; and she takes him to the shore. These are the concluding verses of the poem—

“ Proud swells her heart ! she deems at last
To lure him with her silver tongue ;
And, as the shelving rocks she passed,
She raised her voice and sweetly sung.

In softer, sweeter strains she sung,
Slow gliding o'er the moonlight bay,
When light to land the chieftain sprung
To hail the maid of Colonsay.

Oh, sad the mermaid's gay notes fell,
And sadly sank remote at sea !
So sadly mourns the writhed shell
Of Jura's shore, its parent sea.

And ever, as the year returns,
The charm-bound sailors know the day ;
For sadly still the mermaid mourns
The lovely Chief of Colonsay.”

Of the remaining modern ballads in this volume we will only say that Oehlenschläger's “ The Treasure-seeker ” is prettily conceived, and that “ The Lead Melting, by Claudius Rosenhoff, is one of the most charming little poems we have lately read. One or two compositions which Mr. Buchanan has here introduced—having probably been tempted by their grace and neatness of construction—are properly not ballads at all.

“ It is in supernatural conceptions,” says the preface, “ indeed, in the creation of typical spirits to represent certain ever-present operations of Nature, that the Danish ballads excel—being equalled in that respect only by the German *Lieder*, with which they have so much in common. They seldom or never quite reach the rugged force of *language* shown in such Breton pieces as ‘ Jaunedite Flamm,’ and the wild early battle-song. They are never so refinedly tender as the best Scottish pieces.” So far as the Breton ballads are concerned, we agree with Mr. Buchanan, but take leave to differ with him as regards the Scottish ballads. The intensity of passion in the old Scotch ballads is as far from the refined tenderness of these Scandinavian poems as is the wooing of Viga-Glum from the cooing of one of Mr. Coventry Patmore's heroes. For our own part we greatly prefer the intense self-abandonment and blood-heat of love in the Scottish verses ; but it is not to be concealed that the Danish early ballads have a grace and delicacy which the Scottish ballads, with one or two rare and beautiful exceptions, do not possess. Mr. Buchanan quotes some fine verses from “ Clerk Saunders ” in support of his assertion ; but a far truer type of the Scottish ballad is to be found in “ Helen of Kirkconnell.” Here, also, there is love ; but it is the love

of burning passion, the love of a strong-natured man, not the imaginative tenderness which we find in the book before us. "Nothing can be finer," adds Mr. Buchanan, "than the stories they contain, or more dramatic than the situations these stories entail; but no attempt is made to polish the expression, or refine the imagery." We don't want polished expression and refined imagery in an old ballad; but if these are by any reader considered to be requisites, we beg to stake the character of the Scandinavian ballads in this respect upon the following ballad of the "Two Sisters." It is a most beautiful poem, full of rich picturesqueness and minute detail, and there needs no excuse for copying it entire:—

"THE TWO SISTERS.

- ' One sister to the other spake,
The summer comes, the summer goes !
 ' Wilt thou, my sister, a husband take ?'
On the grave of my father the green grass grows !
- ' Man shall never marry me,
 Till my father's death avenged be.'
- ' How may such revenge be planned ?
 We are maids, and have neither mail nor brand.'
- ' Rich farmers dwell along the vale :
 They will lend us brands and shirts of mail'
 They doff their garb from head to heel ;
 Their white skins slip into coats of steel.
- Slim and tall, with downcast eyes,
 They blush as they fasten swords to their thighs.*
- Their armour in the sunshine glares,
 As forth they ride on jet black mares.
 They ride unto the castle great :
 Dame Erland stands at the castle gate.
- ' Hail ! Dame Erland !' the sisters say ;
 ' And is Herr Erland within to-day ?'
- ' Herr Erland is within indeed ;
 With his guest he drinks the wine and mead !'
- Into the hall the sisters go ;
 Their cheeks are paler than driven snow.
- The maidens in the chamber stand :
 Herr Erland rises with cup in hand.
- Herr Erland slaps the cushion blue :
 ' Rest ye, and welcome ye strangers two !'
- ' We have ridden many a mile ;
 We are weary and will rest a while.'
- ' Oh tell me, have ye wives at home ?
 Or are ye gallants that roving roam !'
- ' Nor wives nor bairns have we at home,
 But we are gallants that roving roam.'

'Then, by our Lady, ye shall try,
Two bonnie maidens that dwell hard by—
Two maidens with neither mother nor sire,
But with bosoms of down and eyes of fire.

*Paler, paler the maidens turn
Their cheeks grow white, but their black eyes burn.*

If they indeed so beauteous be,
Why have they not been ta'en by thee ?

Herr Erland shrugged his shoulders up,
Laughed and drank of a brimming cup.

'Now, by our Lady, they were won
Were it not for a deed already done.

'I sought their mother to lure away,
And afterwards did their father slay !'

Then up they leap, those maidens fair :
Their swords are whistling in the air.

'This for tempting our mother dear !
Their red swords whirl, and he shrieks in fear.

This for the death of our father brave !
Their red swords smoke with the blood of the knave.

They have hacked him into pieces, small
As the yellow leaves that in autumn fall,

Then stalk they forth, and forth they fare ;
They ride to a kirk, and kneel in prayer.

Fridays three they in penance pray.
The summer comes, the summer goes,
They are shriven, and cast their swords away.
On the grave of my father the green grass grows."

Mr. Buchanan has chosen to translate chiefly those ballads which belong to the domestic affections ; and we have consequently in this volume little of the wild, warlike fervour of the north. But the domestic affections occasionally lead to the saddest, and sometimes the savagest of tragedies, as is shown in one particularly ferocious ballad, entitled, " Ebbe Skammelson." This Ebbe Skammelson woos the May Adelaide, and, having been betrothed to her, leaves for a far countree. In his absence his brother Peter Skammelson, also woos the May Adelaide, who remains true to her absent lover until Peter's mother tells the maiden that Ebbe Skammelson is dead. Then she consents to marry his brother, and the marriage-feast is spread. Ebbe Skammelson, warned by a dream that he was about to lose his true love, takes horse and gallops northward :—

" His father and mother asked him in
To sit at the festal board ;
Pale went Ebbe Skammelson
And did not say a word."

The Lady Adelaide leaves the banquet-hall, and Ebb Skammelson will bear the bridal torch before her. When they are alone, he tells her he will kill his brother, and asks her then if she will be his wife. She, having plighted her troth for the second time, will not break her vow :—

“It was Sir Ebbe Skammelson
Spake not nor uttered sound,
Only he grew as white as snow,
And stamped upon the ground.

He followed her unto her bower,
And never a word he spoke;
But Ebbe Skammelson he had
A sword beneath his cloak.

In at the door Sir Ebbe stept,
His drawn sword at his side,
And there beside the bridal bed
He slew the bonnie bride !”

Covering his “sharp sword, dripping red” with his cloak, he again enters the banquet-chamber, and in a few sardonic words, gives up all right to the hand of May Adelaide. But the grim mockery does not last long. He springs upon the table, and cuts down his brother—nay, in his wild fury, he wounds his father, and cuts off his mother’s hand. Thereupon he rushes away from his native land, and we are told that he becomes a beggar, begging for his daily bread.

A marked characteristic of these ballads is their morality. The old minstrels who sang these tales on the long winter evenings of the north, had some notion of poetical justice, as is evidenced even by this Ebbe Skammelson suffering the wretchedness of beggary for his previous crimes. They do not reserve all their admiration for the maiden who flies to the merry greenwood, and bears children to an unknown father, nor for the hero who does not scruple to kill half-a-dozen brothers, in order to secure a stolen kiss. They have something better to sing of in woman than her mere beauty, and in man than his physical prowess. They have recourse to the most ingenious plots and to the prettiest stories, that so a sound moral may be conveyed. “Maid Mettelil” is a good example of this

Long listens Maid Mettelil eagerly :
 ' Who playeth so sweetly to summon me !'

Up and down swell her breasts of snow :
 ' Dare I thither by moonlight go !'

' If I thither by moonlight go,
 Never one of my maids must know."

Maid Mettelil and her little hound set out by moonlight and reach Sir Oluf's bower. She knocks, but he, faithful to his friend Sir Oluf, will not allow her to enter, for she is Sir Oluf's bride. She then implores him to send a servant to accompany her home, and he replies,—

' The moon is clear, and the white stars burn,
 Alone thou hast come, and canst return.'

So she and the little hound run deftly back in the moonlight, and lo! her husband is at the castle-gate to meet her. Being questioned, she replies she has been wandering to hear the nightingale sing. Sir Peter concludes that both his wife and friend have betrayed him; and the poem ends with these ominous words :—

" And no man knew she had been so light,
 But her bower was burnt to the ground that night.

Sir Peter wanders so gloomy and grim ;
 Sir Oluf feareth to meet with him !"

To all husbands and friends the moral of that ballad ought to be clear. Then we have the story of a certain Sir Morten of Fogelsong, who actually rises out of his grave, takes horse, and gallops homewards to redress certain wrongs he had done in his lifetime. A special sin, that of having robbed two fatherless children of a bit of land, so weighed upon him, that he could not sleep peacefully in the churchyard. His wife obeys the ghostly injunction; and Sir Morten's spirit is pacified.

Of the purely dramatic ballads it is almost impossible for us to speak, without giving some specimens of their artistic completeness and dramatic point, and they are too long for quotation here. The finest in the book is undoubtedly, "Axel and Walborg," an elaborately constructed and beautiful poem full of stirring incident.

in a lucky moment he asks counsel of his brother. The remainder of the story we shall give in the original lines :—

‘Then whispered with his brother dear,
The young Sir Morten Dove;
‘And how may I from cloister steal
Away my own true love?’

‘Go dress thyself in grave-clothes white,
And lay thee in a shell,
And I will to the cloister ride,
The bitter tale to tell.’

He dressed himself in grave-clothes white,
And lay in earth-shell cold :
Herr Nilans to the cloister rode,
And the bitter tale was told.

‘Hail unto ye, O holy maids,
And great shall be your gain,
If my dear brother Morten’s corse
May in your walls be lain !

All silent sat the holy maids,
In black, black raiment all—
Only the sweet maid Adelaide
Let work and scissors fall.

Then cried the sweet maid Adelaide,
With tears upon her face,
‘Yea! bury Morten, if ye list,
Here in this holy place.

‘Yea, here, in holy cloister-kirk,
Bury his sweet young clay,
And daily when he lies asleep
I’ll kneel me down and pray !

‘I was a little child when first
I heard him sue and woo;
The Powers of Heaven know full well
That I have loved him true.

‘His cruel father drew him off
Into a strange countree,
And into these dark cloister walls,
Against my will, brought me.’

It was Sir Nilans bent his head,
And whispered in her ear,
‘Ah, dry thine eyes, Maid Adelaide,
And be of happier cheer !’

‘Never shall I forget my woe !
Never forget my wrong !
For murdered is my own true love,
Whom I have loved so long.’

Sorely she wept, Maid Adelaide.

She crept into Sir Morten’s bier,
And prayed to Heaven above;
‘I loved thee, Morten, to the end,
As never maid did love !’

She lighted up the wax lights two,
And sat her by his side;
‘I would to God, dear love, that I
Had in my cradle died.

‘Nine winters, while thou wert away,
Here weary life I led,
And never saw thy face again
Until I saw thee dead !’

And bitterly wept Adelaide,
Wringing her hands so white,
Herr Morten heard her in his shell,
Laughed loud, and rose upright.

Oh, up he stood, and gazed again
On her he loved the best,
And tossed the gloomy grave-clothes off,
And caught her to his breast.

‘O hearken, hearken, my own true love,
Put all thy grief aside;
Thou shalt from cloister follow me,
And be my bonnie bride !

‘Black are the horses that await
In the kirk-yard there without,
And black in suits of iron mail
Await my henchmen stout !’

Softly Sir Morten led her forth
Out of the chapel walls,
And over her shoulders, for a cloak,
He threw the sable pall.

All silence stood the cloister maids,
Reading by candle-light;
They thought it was an angel bore
Their sister off by night.

All silent stood the holy maids,
Save only two or three,
‘That such an angel,’ murmured these,
‘Would come by night for me !’

Honour to young Sir Morten Dove !
His heart was staunch and stout ;
He bore her to his dwelling-house,
And bade the bells ring out.

Honour to young Sir Morten Dove !

have been again and again made familiar to English readers; and their effect upon the translations is to give an air of quaintness and age to these quaint and old poems which is singularly appropriate and pleasing. It remains for us but to say a word in commendation of the woodcuts by which the book is illustrated. They are all more or less pretty, but book-buyers who demand other qualities than mere prettiness will be delighted with a fine bit of landscape, by Mr. T. Dalziel, which illustrates the first of the ballads. Mr. E. Dalziel's "Lead Melting" is a beautifully-drawn picture; but the face of one of the three maidens is characterless. At page 119 there is a fine drawing by Mr. J. Lawson; and throughout the volume there are several clever sketches by Mr. J. D. Watson. Altogether the book is a valuable one, both in respect of its subject and of the manner in which that subject has been treated.

W. B.

LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU

BY THE COUNTESS VON LAUENBRÜCK

CHAPTER VIII.

COUNT LAUENBRÜCK'S letter was a joint production from his younger sons, Max and Hugo, and announced their arrival, about the latter end of August ("in time for the *Chasses*," they said), and ended with greetings for the whole party, including their "English cousin."

"Count Hugo must be quite a young man now," said the Förster, on hearing the news.

"Yes: they tell me he is taller than Max, but not so strong," answered his father.

"It is very nice, their being in the same service, and that they are able to get leave together," said Hilda.

"I hear the Austrian army is to be put on a peace-footing," remarked the secretary.

"Would that affect the Cavalry regiments?"

"Probably not, but it will be easier perhaps to get a long leave in consequence."

"For my part," said the Förster, his genial face brightening up as he spoke of his absent favourite, "I always regretted that Count Hugo did not go into the Rifles—he was such a first-rate shot."

"We will hope that his hand has not forgot its cunning," said the Countess Trene smilingly, as she looked across the table to where the Herr Förster sat.

"And that this may prove a good game year," added her husband. "How does it promise, Herr Förster?"

"Pretty well, I think Herr Graf: foxes are more abundant than the farmers like, so we may hope for pretty good sport."

Hilda could tell me little about her brothers-in-law; they had not been home since her marriage, and her husband "did not know anything to tell" her, he said, "about them." Brothers are proverbially uncommunicative about brothers. All she knew was that Hugo, the Benjamin of the family, was a gentle, spirited, affectionate youth of moderate abilities, but from his generous nature, and bright cheerful disposition, much beloved by all about the place. Max, she said was cleverer, but had been rather in disgrace of late days, having gambled away a large sum amongst his fellow officers, and come down heavily upon his father for debts of honour; further, that he and Fritz did not agree well but, she

scarcely knew the reason why—That they were both good-looking, gentlemanlike young men, and much liked in the several crack cavalry regiments to which they belonged.

The morning after our visit to the prison, Count Lauenbrück came up into my room, and sitting down cosily by the open window, said:

“You have come here, my dear little cousin, for your health, and as you look paler than I like, I want you to try sea-bathing; and, if it suits you, I will drive you over to B—— this morning, when you can inspect the bathing arrangements, and (if they please you) subscribe for a course of baths: my wife and I do this every summer: the still waters of the Baltic are especially agreeable to ladies, since there is little or no tide, and the fine white sand of our shore is pleasant to their timid feet: the baths also are far less exhausting than those on your own stormy coast, where the tides are strong, and tempests more frequent than with us.”

I said I should like to go very much, and Hilda coming in at the same moment, remarked that she would join us, if we would take her.

Three quarters of an hour's drive brought us to the shelving shores of the blue Baltic: we drew up before the door of a long, low inn, close to the sea-side, and within a stone's-throw of the bathing machines, which were clean and roomy, but without awnings. In the road, in front of the inn, a number of ladies were walking up and down in dressing gowns and muslin caps, the whole surmounted by large mushroom straw hats, all of them bearing a strong family likeness to the Noah's-ark females of my infant days. The arrangements proving on the whole satisfactory, I paid my subscription for a course of twelve baths, and we departed amidst a perfect avalanche of bows and polite expressions, from the landlord of the rustic inn, who was also proprietor of the bathing machines. The air blew fresh from the Baltic, the morning was deliciously clear and bright.

“Drive on, dear papa, to the windmill hills,” said Hilda, “and let us walk home from thence. We shall have a lovely view this morning, it is so cool and clear, and the breeze comes so pure and fresh across the sea to that spot.”

The Count did accordingly: at the foot of the hill we got out, and sending the carriage home, began our verdant ascent. The great sails of the windmill were buzzing lazily round, for the breeze was mild even on the heights; the Miller sat in the shade, with a pipe in his mouth, close up against the wooden sides of his abode, watching the sports of two flaxen-haired, blue-eyed children, whose gambols, to my unaccustomed eye, appeared to be conducted dangerously near to the great wooden arms, which came slowly

sweeping round in regular cadence. The Schloss seemed to be almost at our feet, buried in a mass of verdure ; whilst sea-ward, the open view was relieved of monotony, by the distant Danish islands, and a few scattered sails on the horizon. Looking down into the valley, the seclusion and gloom of Lauenbrück surrounded by its double avenues, which looked dark and almost impenetrable from whence we stood, struck me with double force : " Here I should have built my Schloss," I said involuntarily ; " here, where the bright blue sea lies at our feet, where the four winds of Heaven can blow in one's face, where the ship's passing to and fro, seem to give one a glimpse of what is going on in the outer world ; where the sun could shine unhindered on my path ; whence I could watch the sun set and rise, and the birds arriving and departing, in spring and autumn ; whence I could look down on my surroundings, and survey them at my ease."

" And here, on this very spot where we are now standing, it was to have been built," answered Hilda ; " and we should have been looking out of window to-day at the glorious sea, and the beautiful white-sailed ships ; but for an unlucky wind, which, blowing nobody any good, removed Count Lauenbrück's wig and gold-laced hat, transporting them to the valley below, just as he was haranguing the army of architects, masons, gardeners, and surveyors, which he had brought up here with him, to fix this as the site of his future abode : whereon, as tradition saith, the count fell into such an ungovernable fit of rage and fury (the Lauenbrücks have been a violent race even from time immemorial), that he swore a mighty German oath, no doubt flavoured with British expletives, that where the hat and wig were found, there should his Schloss be built, and his household gods set up ! "

We laughed at Hilda's anecdote. In my mind's eye, I saw that Georgian courtier, somewhat rubicund and not a little irate, descending, minus chapeau and perruke, under bare poles, into the valley, looking strangely undignified without the ambrosial wig, like some elderly baby in court garments, followed by his suite in a state of servile civility, pitiful to behold.

" As often as I look at our sluggish moat and gloomy avenues," continued Hilda, " I think of that democratic puff of wind, and of the injury it has done us, down to the third and fourth generation ; for, beautiful as our linden-trees are, I would rather be gazing at the tall masts of the graceful ships upon the open sea, their white sails gleaming in the sunshine ; the sea-gulls and wild duck screeching and whirling around the cliff, between heaven and earth, and the breeze blowing fresh life into one, and whispering a message of freedom from other lands."

" You speak, my child, as though you were not happy in our

valley," said the count, looking kindly at Hilda's bright young face, flushed now with the ascent, and freshened by the breeze.

"Oh yes, I am happy here," she quickly made reply; "why not?"

Ah! "why not?" But I began to have my suspicions—suspicions vague as midnight fears, and equally tormenting.

"For my part," continued the count, smiling, "I think of my ancestor's wig with feelings of unmitigated gratitude, for I infinitely prefer my marble basin with the tame carp and tench, to the eternal monotone of the "sad sea waves," and the roaring autumn winds, and the barren hill sides."

"Here one feels free,"—said Hilda, as though speaking to herself.

"Free? of what my child—you have no cares, no sorrows, no memories," added the count, sadly, "to make Lauenbrück gloomy to you."

"No; but the birds have none of these, either, and yet they delight in their freedom."

"Ah: if you are but an amateur of liberty I am content," said her father-in-law, smiling: "think, my love, how desolate the winter would be here: the wind roaring, the rain beating against the windows, the storm roaring round the lonely hill."

"It is as lonely in the valley; you, who are safely housed in the south, do not guess what it is to hear the bare branches, beating against each other, or tapping at the windows; the trees creaking and groaning, the wind moaning and howling, or sobbing and sighing up and down the avenues."

Her father-in-law looked at her surprised.

"Child," he said, "you are frightening Mabel with your weird imaginations; see, she looks quite pale."

"The sea-breeze has made her hungry," said Hilda, suddenly changing the subject. "Come, let us be moving."

We descended the hill silently, and passing through the village of Lauenbrück, stone built, and red tiled, came upon the church, standing on a gentle eminence, without any pretensions to archi-

by farm buildings and outhouses, of a substantial description; the yard was further encumbered with sundry wains and waggons, and three or four hayricks; geese and poultry of every description were perambulating the premises; and through an open door I saw an antiquated carriage, of a species peculiar to German country pastors, and seeing which in a town, the inhabitants are irreverently wont to designate the vehicles as "Gottes Wort vom Lande." I found, on inquiry, that the living (which was in Count Lauenbrück's gift) was worth about two thousand thalers, or three hundred a year; so that what with his farming (which together with card-playing, and his Sunday sermon, formed the chief cares and business of the Herr Pastor's life), he had a not unenviable lot, and one which many a poor English curate would have been glad to call his own, provided he could have got over the card-playing, and have been content to put off his six days' laity for the clerical duties of the seventh.

At the entrance of the south avenue Count Lauenbrück left us, having an appointment with his steward.

We walked on for some minutes in silence, which Hilda at length broke by asking me if I would come to the "English garden," and look at her sister-in-law's tomb.

Thither we accordingly bent our steps.

"Tell me something about your sister-in-law," I said, *en route*.

"I never knew her," answered Hilda; "she has been dead nearly four years now, and I think my father and mother-in-law's grief is as fresh as ever: they come here sometime every day, and every day, winter and summer, Helen's coffin is decked with fresh flowers."

It was a lovely spot which the bereaved parents had chosen for the last resting-place of their lost darling: shady with clumps of trees; sweet with the fragrance of flowers; bright with the greenest of grass. Railed off from the road by a low wooden paling, the ground undulated gently, and on the summit of a small acclivity, stood the mortuary chapel which Count Lauenbrück had built for his beautiful daughter. The oaken door was open; a gate of light floriated ironwork allowed one to look into the chapel which we presently entered. From the spot where we stood we had a peaceful smiling view across the broad meadows to the village

garden, upon it. On the altar, which was of black velvet with reredos of black, stood a large ivory crucifix, two vases filled with fresh flowers, and candlesticks of ebony and ivory. Over the altar hung a picture of the dead Helene, exquisitely beautiful in conception and execution. There was something so spiritual, so happy, so heavenly-joyful (if I may be allowed the expression) in the young girl's face, that, in looking at it, one ceased to be sad: one only felt that she had indeed "entered into the joy of the Lord," and was for ever at peace. The figure draped in white, as we are wont to clothe angels, had, in truth, an angelic purity of outline and expression; the great earnest eyes gazed up to heaven, with a longing, which would have been almost painful in its intensity, but for the joy which illuminated the fair forehead, like a halo of glory; the soft lips, parted in a happy smile, seemed already to be singing sweet heavenly strains: the golden brown locks fell in rich glory over the white-robed form; the slender hands clasped a graceful palm-branch, and the dark purple of the background was relieved by stars.

It was a serene picture. Death seemed to lose its sting in gazing at it, and the grave its victory. At the head of the coffin, which was of carved oak, and the top of which was ornamented by a large cross, marked out in flowers, lay a silver-gilt crucifix; at the feet two standards filled with lilies; the stained-glass windows cast a tempered glow upon the whole; the air was fresh and sweet.

As we walked homewards, Hilda told me the sad, sad story which had darkened her father and mother-in-law's life for ever. She told me how, after many year's service in Russia, Count Lauenbrück had returned to the home of his fathers, and how Helene's sixteenth birth-day was to be celebrated with great rejoicings. The day before her *fête* her father and brother left home to bring back all the presents with which their beautiful darling was to be delighted; late in the evening, and whilst her mother and some friends were in the next room, the young countess called her maid, and said she wished to go to bed, for that she was tired, and that she must rest well in order to enjoy the next day. The maid proceeded to unplait and comb her splendid golden hair; her young mistress chatting merrily with her, in gay anticipations of the morrow: the gala dress lay spread out in its crisp freshness on the bed, and Helene expressed her pleasure in its prettiness. Suddenly a scream from the maid brought the Countess Irene into the room to see—her beautiful daughter lying lifeless on the floor: they raised her, and bore her tenderly to bed. Expresses were sent off for physicians to the neighbouring towns; a groom rode with a note to meet Count Lauenbrück and prepare him for the

dreadful news. Late in the night he arrived; he had not been able in the darkness to read the hurried lines his wife's trembling hand had scrawled, but the man's agitation and broken voice had told him enough. His beautiful child never spoke again. About three o'clock on her birth-day morn, she opened her great blue eyes; those who were round her marked with joy the painless, happy smile which passed across her pale features, and the next moment was fixed there by death. The artist who painted the picture of which I have spoken, had caught the glorified expression of her parting moments, and with subtle art had perpetuated them on his canvass.

This Hilda told me in hushed tones; then she added: "They never speak of that time."

The unhappy father began at once to build this mortuary chapel for his beloved daughter; he could not bear her, he said, to be lying so far away from him, amongst those who had never known or cared for her; but meanwhile, the coffin had to be placed in the grim family vault. All the time that the chapel was building and the pictures painting, her name was never spoken; but the old count came daily to the ground, which he was having laid out in what is called abroad an "English garden," and superintended the planting thereof himself. The poor mother never went near the spot.

"The morning came at last," said Hilda, "when the coffin was to be moved; twelve young men, sons of tenants, begged to be allowed to carry it to the chapel; my father-in-law and the Herr Pastor followed the sad procession—the Pastor speaking such words of comfort and consolation as were given to him in that hour, my father-in-law making no sign. The coffin-bearers came silently into the chapel, and setting their sacred burthen softly down, they went away. Then, oh! Mabel, fancy what they saw? and, when my father saw it, he fell down like one dead; the coffin had been made of unseasoned wood, and, thinking it was so soon to be moved, they had placed the beautiful oak coffin in the chapel, ready to receive the lighter one in which she lay; from the damp of the vault the wood had split, and shaken by the removal from the church hither, a long thick tress of golden brown hair lay waving over the chapel pavement where they had laid her!"

"Oh, how dreadful; but why did they disturb the dead? why not leave her where they first laid her?"

"It was a fancy of my father-in-law's: I do not think that his wife knew much about it."

"And Count Lauenbrück—?"

"When he recovered from the long swoon into which he had fallen, he was weeping bitterly, and for the first time since her death he spoke Helene's name."

"And the Herr Pastor?"

"He led my father-in-law gently away: at first he wanted to open the coffin and look at her again—he would not believe she was dead; but by degrees he became calmer, and the next time he came here, the chapel was as you see it now; the coffin covered with roses and lilies, the picture looking so happy and glorified that I think he was comforted."

It was a painful story: I was glad to meet Fritz and his father, at the entrance of the garden, and to hear that we were late, for that the dressing bell had sounded, and that visitors had arrived unexpectedly to dinner.

Seated at Count Lauenbrück's right hand, and in the place which I had hitherto occupied at dinner, was an old lady of such marvellous beauty, that I found it difficult to withdraw my eyes from her face after making my reverence, which I did in due form, sinking into a profound curtsy, after the fashion of the country, on the Count's introducing me to her. On the Countess's right sat a fine stalwart old gentleman, who rose from his chair on my name being mentioned, and facing about, bowed so profoundly, that I felt unpleasantly small, and not inconsiderably embarrassed by his stiff but courtly salutation. I observed that sundry little ends of coloured ribbon were attached to various button-holes of his coat, and learnt from Count Karl who (by the new arrangements) came to be my neighbour at table, that he was Grand Chamberlain, et cetera, et cetera, to the Grand Duke of X——.

"How beautiful his wife is!"

"She is celebrated therefore throughout the length and breadth of the land."

"Of this particular land, or throughout Germany?"

"Nay, my gallantry forbids me to define the limits."

"But she is not young?"

"She cannot be in her *premiere jeunesse*, since, to my certain knowledge, she has been a grandmother these eight or ten years."

"But how wondrously beautiful!"

"And such a rare type!"

"Are her sons and daughters handsome?"

"Her only daughter is a very lovely woman, but tall and dark,

Lauenbrück, and I think the two families looked forward to a marriage between Helene and Oscar, cementing the relationship: my poor little niece's death put a stop to that; but notwithstanding, Oscar came to live in a small estate on the borders of Lauenbrück, which belongs to the P—— family, and was a most agreeable neighbour. His parents have come, for the first time since his death, to visit the property; and just before you came in they asked my brother and sister-in-law to drive over and take tea with them to-morrow; strange to say, their son and my poor little niece both died of the same disease, heart complaint."

Baroness P—— was one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen. Rather below the middle height, she was exquisitely formed, her hands and arms perfect models of beauty; her dress, of rich black silk, sat off the fairness of such a complexion as I have never before or since seen equalled: not a line or wrinkle disturbed the uniform satin of her skin: the cheeks, slightly tinged with rose, were beautifully formed: a delicate aquiline nose gave character to her face, whilst her little mouth, filled with a row of teeth even and white as pearls, and her large well-opened, clear-blue eyes, and golden hair dressed in large frizzed curls, and covered with a cap of rich lace, *a la Marie Stuart*, made her look like some beautiful picture, which had stepped out of its frame, and come down to make mortals happy by its perfect loveliness.

The king of Prussia, so Count Karl whispered to me during the clatter of dinner, had been madly in love with the Countess Adal-gunda von Lauenbrück, and had used all his powers of persuasion to gain her consent to their union: but her parents, far too proud to agree to a morganatic marriage, carried her off to Italy, and she shortly afterwards prudently married the Baron. It is to be hoped that the king soon consoled himself after the fashion of royalty, for the lady lived, as the fairy tales say, "happy ever afterwards."

As soon as dinner was over, the ladies withdrew to one of the drawing-rooms: I could not help contrasting the two elder ladies as they walked before us through the dining-hall; and I was glad to place myself in the deep recess of the window, with a piece of work, as my ostensible occupation, in order to consider the charms of

and beautifully less." I heard a murmur of "His Royal Highness, Her Excellency, Serenissimo, His Transparency," and so on; probably relating to the court chronicles of X—, and I hoped Fritz's entrance might create a favourable diversion: but as he sat down by me, first expressing his opinion that it was "horrid slow," and then confiding to me that he felt "awfully bored," on occasions like the present, there seemed little chance of a new element in the conversation on the sofa. Presently Hilda got up, and on pretence of giving her husband a cup of coffee, came towards where we were sitting. "You know you are contraband here, Fritz," she said in a low voice, "for we ladies never like gentlemen to be present at our coffee and scandal; but, for Heaven's sake, come over and talk to her; don't commit such a breach of etiquette: I have swallowed more yawns than I shall digest in a month, and my jaws quite ache with the exertion!"

"Not I," said Fritz, comfortably sipping his coffee.

"O! but you must! look at poor mamma, how pale she is!"

"That's another thing: I'll do it for my mother; but you know, Hilda, I object, on principle, to old ladies' society: especially to old ladies who are so alarmingly young as——"

"Hush, hush!" said Hilda, hurriedly, "she is already setting us down as bores, for conversing together in an unknown tongue: I must go back: come Fritz, but not directly, lest she should think I have been prompting you."

"Oh, hang it!" said Fritz, with more perspicacity than politeness, "don't disturb a fellow's mind with all those admonitions; it's bad enough, you know, without your making it worse."

"Then why did you come in?"

"I saw Mabel at the window."

"Very well; but mind what I say, or there will be no end of trouble."

"All right—you go on—I follow suit."

I felt as though the beautiful little lady, who was still as stiff and upright as ever, had heard every word of this dialogue, but she gave no sign, and talked on fresh, neat, bright and calm as before.

Picking himself slowly up, Fritz got himself across the room, but not without interruption; his three black dogs, hearing the

of them up bodily in her arms, made a hasty exit, and Fritz kicking Nep, that attached brute also fled, loudly howling as he went. Baroness P—— pausing in the midst of an account of a clothing-club, founded by the grand Duchess, and largely subscribed to by all the aristocracy of X——, surveyed this scene with an expressionless calm, positively alarming to behold. Fritz, freed from his persecutors, dropped into a yellow satin fauteuil at the Baroness's elbow, with a sigh of relief; whilst she, without looking at him, but staring calmly at his mother, said distinctly these awful words "I hate dogs"—and then continued her narrative till it was brought to a happy conclusion by the ladies of the court resolving to devote every Thursday and Saturday (on which days the grand ducal theatre was closed) to charitable purposes.

The sun was shining brightly across the lawn, and I heard the rolling of the bowls from the bowling-green, and the cry of the marker, as the skittles went down; there was a fragrant smell of coffee in the room, and the bees were humming in the linden-trees, and still the talk on the sofa went on, in its dull monotony, and still Countess Trene smiled politely, and Hilda patiently listened. Once there was some allusion to the lost children; Countess Lauenbrück's cheek flushed for a moment, then she turned pale again, and I saw there was a tear in her eye, as her daughter's name was spoken.

"My son was a most accomplished young man," said the Baroness in an obliging manner, glancing askance at Fritz, who appeared quite insensible of the attention: "a most promising young man; polished, accomplished, and amiable; calculated to distinguish himself in whatever position of life he might be called upon to fill." I felt as though I were reading an epitaph on a Georgian tombstone, and began to wonder how much the classic calm of the Baroness's character might have contributed to the preservation of her wonderful beauty.

Then the conversation droned on again, and I lost the thread of all the Grand ducal sayings, and the Transparent doings, of the Serene charities, and the Excellent hospitalities, and was gradually growing drowsy, what with the bowls and the bees and the coffee, when a sound—horrible, indeed, and portentous of irremediable offence—smote upon my ears, and woke me up to a full sense of the enormity, on the brink of which I had also been unconsciously trembling. We all sprang to our feet. The countess and Hilda, in the greatest dismay, were pouring out apologies with an anxiety touching in its distress—for—oh—horrible to relate—Fritz, yielding to the seductions of the drowsy god, had given himself up to slumber, and suddenly, with a great snort, had dropped his curly head upon the baroness's shoulder! *O tempora! O mores!*

The poor fellow looked foolish enough, but he attempted no further apology than was conveyed in some feeble murmurs, about "being very sorry." He probably felt that the least said the soonest mended, and that his sin scarcely admitted of palliation.

Baroness P——, standing very upright in the centre of the room, for she had sprung up as though a viper had stung her, on the reception of Fritz's accolade, looked fresh, prim and unruffled as ever; the pink tinge in her cheeks were perhaps a shade rosier as she said, not even glancing at the culprit, and without in any way answering the countess's and Hilda's apologies:—

"I think it is time for us to be going."

No one was courageous enough to oppose her implied intention; "Allow me, Frau Baronin," said poor Hilda, "to ring for your carriage."

"And perhaps you would be kind enough to order your servants to give the baron, my husband, notice of my departure."

This was done accordingly; and the baron came jovially from the skittle-ground, his rosy face reddened by his exertions, and his thick white hair standing on end. The baroness took a ceremonious leave of the countess and Hilda, and a yet more ceremonious one of myself; as for Fritz, she ignored him altogether; but the baron not being aware of what a culprit he was, shook him cordially by the hand, and as they drove off, shouted back at us, waving his hand (for we had conducted the visitors to their carriage), "I shall expect all you young people to tea to-morrow; mind, Fritz, that you drive over with your two new bays, of which I hear such wonderful things!"

THE BANKER'S WARD

CHAPTER I

"No; I cannot give my consent to their engagement," said Sir William to Lady Mansfield, as they were seated in the drawing-room at Mansfield Hall. "I have thought the matter over, and it is impossible. Helen is young, and cannot have conceived any very deep affection for this young Evelyn. Moreover, I think that she is bound to consider our wishes in some measure; and I have thoroughly fixed my determination."

"But," said Lady Mansfield, sighing, "it does seem somewhat hard that we should thwart her in this; for I am convinced that her heart is thoroughly set upon it; and she has clearly shown her respect for our feelings and authority by at once consulting us, before even giving young Evelyn any answer to his suit."

"Yes; I am quite ready to admit the propriety of her conduct so far. Yet, unless she is prepared to abide by our decision in the matter, the reference to us will be nothing more than a mere piece of form."

"She is prepared to accept our decision, for she is a good and loving child, and does not easily cast aside the recollection of the many happy years spent under our roof since the sudden death of both her parents. She heartily appreciates your approval of whatever she may do; and therefore she has earnestly begged me to intercede for her with you. Will nothing move you, William? Frank Evelyn is a gentleman in every sense of the word; and is in every way calculated to make her a good husband."

"Yes; that may be so: but, nevertheless, I have my objections, which I cannot waive. You must remember that Helen Conway will become possessed of a very large fortune, either in the event of her marrying with my consent, or absolutely and unconditionally, on attaining the age of twenty-one. She is still young—barely more than seventeen—and I am not inclined to surrender her fortune into the keeping of this Evelyn."

"But he will not make any difficulty about money: he will be perfectly willing to take Helen, and leave her fortune untouched till she shall reach the appointed age."

"Yes, Marian; that sounds very well: but it will not do. What would people say to such an arrangement? I am very sorry to refuse Helen; and I am still more sorry to be obliged to differ with you on the point; but my determination is irrevocable. And

I shall leave you to communicate my final decision to her in as gentle a way as you may find possible. But let us not discuss so unpleasant a topic any longer, as I have my own reasons for giving this answer to her request."

And so the fate of Helen Conway, the ward of Sir William Mansfield, the great banker of Lombard Street, was settled. Helen had been for nearly ten years under the guardianship of the Mansfields, having been especially entrusted to their care by her father just before his death; and had learned to regard them almost as her own parents, so kind had been their treatment of her, and so thoroughly attached had she become to them by the association of so many years. Her father had been a partner in the bank of which Sir William was now the head, and had bequeathed the whole of his large fortune to his only child, leaving the property in the trust of the banker, with the condition, before-mentioned, as to Helen's coming into possession. The Mansfields, moreover, having no children of their own, and having frequently expressed their intention of making their ward their eventual heiress, it may easily be imagined that there was no lack of suitors for her hand; and the banker had already received on her behalf the offers of three representatives of various impoverished noble houses. But these proposals had been so evidently made for Helen's money, that their rejection had been fully endorsed by her. The suit of Frank Evelyn, however, was of a different nature and character; and when Helen Conway heard the stern refusal of her guardian to entertain it, her feelings were those of sorrow, grief, and indignation commingled. She had been so accustomed to accept Sir William's decision in all matters as final and binding, that at first, in this instance also, her tendency seemed to acquiesce. But soon the spirit of rebellion rose within her, and she began to ask herself why, in so important a question, she herself was to have no voice? why her suitor was to be condemned and rejected unheard.

Though, therefore, Lady Mansfield communicated the baronet's decision to her in as delicate and gentle a form as the circumstances would permit, she saw that the manner of her ward was altered. From the dutiful, obedient, unquestioning child, she seemed suddenly to have developed into a high-spirited and determined woman. And she said pretty plainly that, from the way in which she had been treated, she considered her right established to look after her own interests, and to demand some definite reason why she should dismiss the lover, upon whom already she had bestowed the young affections of her heart.

But though Lady Mansfield sympathised strongly and heartily with Helen, she knew Sir William's character too well to imagine for a moment, that after so decided an expression of opinion on his

part, he would relent, and give in even to the united wishes of his wife and ward. When, therefore, Frank Evelyn called at Mansfield Hall at the time which had been appointed, he saw at once, from the shade of grief which overspread Helen's face, that he was not destined to hear good news. It was with a trembling frame and pale face that Helen Conway received him.

"My Helen," he said, seizing both her hands between his: "I fear—indeed, I see from your face that you have no good news for me."

"I have referred the question to Sir William, and he thinks that it would be better that our engagement should not take place."

"And you, Helen? Do you endorse this cruel decision? What reason does he give for my rejection?"

"He gives no reason, Frank."

"No reason!" and he paced once or twice across the room, muttering something indistinctly. And then, stopping suddenly in front of where Helen was sitting, he said—

"Helen! I think it is only justice to you and to myself, that some reason should be given for so summary a refusal. What his motive can be, I know not. If he has a word to say against me in any way, I shall be glad to court inquiry in the fullest form."

There was a tone of anger in his voice, and a look of resolute determination in his face, that somewhat alarmed Helen. She rose from her seat, laid her arm gently on his, and said—

"Frank, do not be angry."

He threw his arms around her, and said—

"Helen, I am not angry with you, you know it: but I do not think we are fairly dealt with. My darling, you are sure of your love for me? You really think and believe that I shall be able to make you happy?"

"I do, Frank, from the bottom of my heart. Whatever may happen, nothing shall ever change my feelings towards you."

"And you believe that I really love you, as you deserve to be loved."

"I do."

"Then, Helen, I declare that they shall not part us: even if they succeed for a time, they shall not break the tie that binds our hearts together. And more, I say, that I will have from Sir William's own lips his reason for wishing to put an end to our mutual love."

"Oh! Frank, be gentle. Remember all the kindness that I have experienced at his hands. For the last ten years, he has been to me in the place of a father."

"I do remember it, Helen; but even that memory must not prevent me from knowing his reason. His kindness in the past,

cannot for a moment justify his cruel conduct now. I will see to it. I will see Sir William myself. If then he can show good cause for demurring to my suit; and if you, on hearing that cause, can really and truly acquiesce in the justice of his objections; then—and then only, will I withdraw, and pray fervently that you may find one more worthy of you—one who will love you with a truer and a deeper love. When I hear from your lips, Helen, that Sir William has convinced you, I will obey; but no other voice than your own shall induce me to resign you. Till then, nothing shall move me; nothing!”

And he strained her to his heart in the vehemence of his passionate love; and kissed her as the token of his unfaltering devotion. She, looking tearfully up into his face, said—

“Frank, nothing shall change me. I do indeed love you, and I will be firm through every trial and every change.”

“God bless you, my darling. But fear not, if we but remain true to each other, we shall bring things to a happy issue. Meanwhile I must see Sir William, or perhaps I had better write to him first. Then, if his letter does not satisfy me, I will see him in person, and learn something more definite.”

“Promise me one thing, Frank; be gentle with him.”

“I will be just, Helen, and justice must claim the precedence of all else.”

And so the lovers parted, each eager for the solution of the mystery which seemed to overhang their courtship; a mystery, however, which a few days was destined to clear up.

CHAPTER II.

FRANK EVELYN was considerably perplexed, at what he considered the extraordinary conduct of Sir William Mansfield in declining his proposal for the hand of Helen Conway, without vouchsafing any reason for his refusal. But after the excitement of his interview with Helen had passed away, he began to view the question in a calmer manner, and to flatter himself that a little conversation with the baronet would adjust the matter. He knew well enough, or at least, he fancied that he knew well enough, that monetary considerations could have no connection with his rebuff, for Sir William had been the banker of the Evelyns for many years. It might, indeed, be possible, that he was looking higher for Helen, and expected that the large fortunes which she would inherit would give her a claim to a coronet; but it was well-known that three such offers had been distinctly and deliberately refused. He was therefore compelled to lay aside this possible explanation, and determined to write at once, and obtain the elucidation of his difficulty.

Accordingly, Sir William found a letter from Evelyn lying on the breakfast table for him the next morning. He broke it open impatiently, and read—

"Sir,—I have received to-day indirect information that you entertain a strong objection to my suit for the hand of your ward, Miss Conway. I shall be glad to receive from you either contradiction of the same, or some reason for your refusal, that shall enable me definitely to accept it.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"To Sir William Mansfield, Bart.

"FRANK EVELYN."

"Confound the fellow's pertinacity!" was the baronet's remark, when he had read the letter. "But I will soon convince him that I know my own mind, and that I mean to adhere to the line of conduct which I have marked out." And he forthwith indited the following reply, which he immediately despatched:—

"Sir,—I beg to state that your information is perfectly correct; and to inform you that I have no intention either of altering my opinion, or of holding myself answerable to you for any step which I may take with reference to the future interests of my ward.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"To Frank Evelyn, Esq.

"WILLIAM MANSFIELD."

And having sent his reply to the post, he complacently flattered himself that he had done everything that was needful, and had completely settled Evelyn's claim; though occasionally a doubt crossed his mind as to whether he had not been too laconic and abrupt, and had treated his correspondent in somewhat too contemptuous a style. He speedily, however, dismissed any such thought, and early in the course of the morning took his departure from Mansfield Hall, to attend to his important business in Lombard Street.

Directly after his arrival at the Bank he summoned his confidential manager to his private room.

"How do matters stand, Baynes?" he asked, as soon as the door was closed.

"Very badly, Sir William."

"How? What do you mean by very badly? Have we enough actual cash to meet to-day's probable demands?"

"Yes; I think there is no doubt that we can go through to-day; and might possibly manage to-morrow, if no heavy cheque comes in."

"Good! I almost feared matters were worse. However, it is perfectly evident something must be done, and that promptly, too; for if the rumour once gets abroad in the City that we are short, it will be all over with us; we should be obliged to stop payment."

"We should, Sir William," echoed the manager.

"Now, Baynes, that is a contingency that we must carefully guard against."

The manager slowly inclined his head.

"It is a danger which must be averted," continued the banker.

"It must," the manager replied.

"At all risks and hazards."

"At all risks and hazards," was the echo.

"You understand distinctly what I mean, Baynes? Nothing—nothing must stop us from taking the necessary measures to avert this blow. No compunction must stand in our way. Do you understand me?"

"Y—e—s, Sir William."

"And you are prepared to go through with it? Mind, you have my authority for doing it."

"I am prepared, Sir William."

"It has succeeded before."

"And it shall do so again," replied Baynes, suddenly seeming to wake up, and with a look of determination on his face.

"You are an invaluable servant, Baynes. Let us lose no time. How much do we want?"

"Fifty thousand pounds."

"And there are securities good for the amount?"

"For more than double."

"Then raise sixty thousand. You understand me? The bank requires fifty: raise sixty, and I shall be satisfied."

"The amount shall be in this house before to-morrow morning. Will you oblige me with the key of the strong room?"

"It is in my private drawer, Baynes. But, mind, let everything be done carefully and secretly. Be judicious in your selection."

"I will take care of that, Sir William. You will give me authority to raise sixty thousand pounds, and to pay away ten thousand privately for you? The balance will be available for business purposes to-morrow morning?"

"Show him in, Baynes—show him in."

And accordingly Frank Evelyn was ushered into Sir William Mansfield's private room.

Evelyn looked towards the banker as if he expected to read in his face the unmistakeable indications of enmity; but he was completely surprised when Sir William advanced towards him, with a smile upon his face, and, shaking him warmly by the hand, said:—

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Evelyn. You have doubtless received my note on the matter on which you communicated with me?"

"I have, Sir William," answered Evelyn, scarcely knowing what to think of the manner of his reception—whether to interpret it unfavourably or otherwise.

"Ah! then we may consider that affair as settled. Is there anything in the way of business in which my advice can be of service to you?"

"Sir William Mansfield, you must allow me to assure you at once that, far from considering the matter which you have mentioned as settled, I have sought this interview with you now for the express purpose of getting some more definite explanation from you, as to your motives in so decidedly putting your veto upon my engagement with Miss Conway. I know perfectly well that you are invested with certain powers of discretion in your capacity of guardian, and I do not deny your perfect right of exercising those powers, especially in an affair of so much importance as the present. But I, at the same time, think that, after the many years during which my family have been known to you, it would at least have been an act of courtesy on your part to mention to me the reason for giving me an answer in the negative. If the objection be in any way connected with money affairs, I could in some measure understand it, though I believe I could remove all apprehensions on that score. If—but I will start no more hypotheses; I will appeal to you frankly to give me some explanation of my rejection. I do not think you can refuse it."

"I admit the justice of a great deal that you say, Mr. Evelyn; but at the same time I can assure you that I have thoroughly made up my mind; and it will be mere waste of time to endeavour to change my decision."

"That will in a great measure depend upon the nature of your objection."

"I beg your pardon; there you are mistaken. My decision will not be influenced by any modification of my original objection."

"Will that be just, Sir William?"

"Perfectly so."

"I really cannot understand it."

"Pray do not attempt to do so. Accept my answer; it will be quite sufficient,"

"Nay! I fairly look for some reason."

"I fear that your expectations, however fair they may be, will nevertheless be doomed to remain unfulfilled."

"Am I to conclude, then, that you refuse to accede to my very moderate request?"

"That is the only conclusion to which my remarks can lead you. I am sorry to disappoint you, but I can say no more."

"Then, Sir William, learn that I am not only disappointed but dissatisfied; and that I shall make my dissatisfaction felt in a way that you will not fail to appreciate. You have treated me most unhandsomely—most unfairly. I love Helen Conway, and she is willing to accept me for her husband. Show the good cause or reason why this should not be. You cannot, or will not. Be it so. I accept your answer now, but not in the spirit that you wish. Once more, I ask you either to grant my suit, or to show reason to the contrary."

"I cannot recall my words," the banker answered, rather slowly.

"That is your irrevocable decision?"

"It is."

"Then I must save you the trouble of recalling them, by rendering them utterly vain and futile. Sir William, I have learned that to-day which has shaken my faith in the whole commercial world, and which, doubtless, you too will learn in very good time. I know your reason for rejecting my suit. You do not wish to part with Helen Conway's property. You *cannot* part with it."

Sir William Mansfield started from his seat, swiftly bolted the door of the apartment, and with a terrified stare confronted his visitor. His face became almost livid, and his lips ashy white.

"What do you mean, Frank Evelyn? You are trifling with me."

"Judge for yourself, Sir William, whether I am trifling. Your conscience will absolve or condemn you on your just merits."

"Explain, explain!" said the banker, sharply.

"It is my turn to refuse, Sir William. I shall withdraw the whole of my deposit, close my current account, and—I must also trouble you to send the title deeds of my estates in Devonshire and my Mexican bonds to my solicitors before four o'clock this afternoon. I will now wish you good morning, Sir William. Perhaps we may meet again."

And Frank Evelyn coolly unfastened the bolt of the door, and walked out of the banker's room. The moment he had gone, Sir William went into the outer office, and gave instructions that

Baynes, the manager, should come in to him the instant he returned.

It was an anxious time for the banker—that which elapsed between Evelyn's departure, and Baynes's return from the business on which he had been despatched, and he paced continually up and down the room, muttering to himself:—"What can he mean? What can he know?"

But Baynes presently re-appeared, and he turned sharply to him.

"Have you succeeded, Baynes?"

"I have, Sir William."

The banker gave a sigh of relief.

"By the way, where are the title-deeds of the Evelyn estates?"

"Mortgaged—six months ago, Sir William."

The banker uttered a groan of terror.

"And the Mexican bonds?"

"I sold them to-day."

"Go, Baynes; that will do." The banker uttered a low cry of anguish, terror, and despair. "My God!" he cried, "I am a ruined man!"

CHAPTER III.

THE scene which ensued at Mansfield Hall, on the banker's return home, was such as to cause the utmost consternation and dismay, both to his wife and ward. For more than an hour he lay upon a couch almost insensible, muttering, however, from time to time, incoherent remarks, in which the names of Frank Evelyn and Helen Conway were strangely prominent. But to all the entreaties of Lady Mansfield that he would speak to her, and tell her the nature of his trouble, he replied only by a vacant, terrified stare, still again and again muttering the name of Evelyn, sometimes in threatening tones and with threatening gestures, at others in the sad and anguished accents of despair. It was plain that some terrible misfortune had overtaken him, which had prostrated both strength and energy, and clouded for the time the intellect which had once been so keen and penetrating.

But how to get at the key to the mystery, Lady Mansfield knew not. The more she endeavoured to rouse her husband from his torpor, the more settled and alarming became the symptoms of prostration. The doctor being called in, pronounced the case to be entirely beyond the range of his skill; to be the effect of some fearful mental trouble, the result of some sudden and unexpected shock. The only thing that he could suggest, was that the banker should be got to bed as soon as possible, and that nature, overtaxed and shaken, should be allowed quiet and repose for the recovery of

its energies. In accordance, then, with his advice, the banker was carried to his room, and after a somewhat restless night, awoke in the morning, still much depressed and agitated, but able to answer the questions that were put to him. His first request was that Helen should come to him ; and in spite of the endeavours of Lady Mansfield to dissuade him from too soon taxing his returning strength, he persisted in his determination to see his ward. As soon as he had gained his point, with a surprising show of alacrity he dressed himself, and walked with a firm step down to the library. There Helen Conway was awaiting him.

"Helen !" he said, with a forcible effort at composure, as soon as he had closed the door of the apartment. "I have much—very much to say to you. Will you listen patiently?"

She came to the spot where he was standing, and with tears in her eyes, said : "My father, I will—"

But he stopped her instantly.

"Hush ! not that word ! I have, indeed, but poorly supplied the place of the noble parent whom you have lost."

"No ! oh ! no ! do not say that," answered Helen, alarmed at his vehemence.

"Yes," he said, in a tone of fierce determination : "it is all over now. The die is cast ! and I am a ruined man. Helen, you must listen—patiently."

"I will," she replied, growing more and more alarmed.

"Helen ! tell me about this affair with Frank Evelyn. You love him ?"

"I do, indeed."

"And he loves you—truly, and as you deserve ?"

"Yes ! oh ! yes."

"And he would marry you—even if you were not the great heiress that you are supposed ?"

"Frank will be true through everything."

"Then, I will tell you all, Helen : all !" he repeated, in a loud tone of voice : "And you will promise to forgive me for the injury that I have done you ?"

She leaned her head on his shoulder, and spoke with some difficulty :—"There is nothing to forgive. But you do not know, Sir William, how I love Frank. Do not—do not part us."

"It is beyond my power now to do anything—for good or for evil. I am a helpless, downcast, shattered man. I am in your power : at the mercy of you and Frank Evelyn. It is a bitter day, indeed, when I must speak like this. But the story must be told, and I would sooner tell it you. There is a long chapter of wrongs and injuries. But my day is past ; my pride is gone : and I must make

the small reparation or atonement that may yet be in my power; even if everything be not too late."

These wild words thoroughly confused and unnerved Helen, and she listened, in trembling silence, as her guardian continued—"Helen! you once had a large fortune—committed to my trust. I have shamefully betrayed that trust; Helen, you are penniless. I have said it now. Can you ever forgive me?"

"Is that all your trouble, my father?" she said: "I care not for my money. You were welcome—more than welcome to it, if it could be of service to you."

For an instant he gazed with wonder upon her lovely face. "No! no! Helen," he said: "tell me you forgive me. If I could but hear your forgiveness, I would bear the rest."

"From the bottom of my heart, and before Heaven, I wipe away all thought of my loss. Do not—pray do not, let that trouble you."

"Noble, generous heart!" muttered the banker, and then:—"But there is more. I fear I have done that to Frank Evelyn which he never can pardon. Now, Helen, you see my reason for wishing to stay your marriage. Your fortune was gone. I hoped in time to get it back; then I would have furthered your every wish."

"I will telegraph to Frank. He will come directly at my calling. Will you trust me to speak to him?"

"I place myself entirely in your hands."

Helen Conway lost no time in despatching a message to Frank Evelyn; nor did he delay to obey her summons. But when he arrived he was surprised at the state of agitation in which he found her. The communication which Sir William Mansfield had but just made to her, was indeed of a nature to unnerve even the strongest mind. She could not fully understand the extent of the calamity which she had that morning learned. And she knew that it was something fearful and terrible; and she scarcely dared to think how it all would end. She knew Frank's nature was hot and hasty, and she feared that he would be terribly outraged at what had passed. But she trusted in some measure to her influence with him, to soothe his feelings and mollify his indignation.

"My darling," he said, "I have come instantly at your bidding. But what is the cause of these tears? I have seen Sir William, and I have told him what I have discovered. He was little prepared for my revelations. Helen, what is to be done? He has ruined you; and he has gone some way towards ruining me. We must not be parted. He cannot wish to part us now."

"Frank, I know all. Sir William has told me everything.

Oh! if you could but see him now, I am sure you would feel for

him. He is so terribly fallen—such an utter wreck of his former self.”

“Helen! I cannot forgive the way in which he has wronged and injured you. For myself, I care not. But that he should have robbed, and defrauded the child who was so confidently intrusted to his honour, that can never be forgiven. He must reap as he has sown.

“Frank!” she cried, clinging to him with an almost convulsive gesture. “Oh! unsay that, for Heaven’s sake, unsay those cruel words. For my sake, Frank, do not speak in that angry tone! You terrify me, so that I scarcely know what I do or say. Spare my father!”

“Father!” he answered, indignantly, “does he dare to usurp the name of one to whom he has played so villanous a part.”

“Frank, for my sake, you will not refuse me!” and she looked up into his face appealingly.

For more than a minute—a minute full of agony for her—he did not speak. Then he said:—

“Helen, you have conquered! I forego my vengeance on this man, even though I fear I am wrong in doing so. But, Helen, you must come away; this is no place for you.”

“God bless you, Frank!” she answered. And that was all she could say, for her feelings completely overpowered her.

“You must come away, Helen.”

“I will go to the end of the world with you, Frank; but you will let Sir William see you. You will tell him that the past shall be forgiven?”

“No, Helen; not even for you can I do that. I cannot trust myself face to face with such a man. You may tell him; and tell him also that you must leave here this very day, this very hour.”

The next day Frank Evelyn and Helen Conway were married by special license; and at once departed for the Continent. By the kind intercession of his wife, Frank was induced to surrender all claims upon the banker. And after some little time, Sir William, a reformed man, and with the bitter lessons of experience fresh in his memory, contrived, by dint of persevering industry, to retrieve his position. He has restored to Helen the greater portion of the fortune which he had appropriated, and Frank himself even is a believer in the integrity which, though late, has nevertheless entered into the character of the once reckless and unscrupulous banker.

MARK SHATTOCK.

"OUT OF CHARITY"

CHAPTER XVII.

AN INTERVIEW AT MARLBY.

THAT Monday, the thirteenth of October, so eventful in Warwickshire and in Somersetshire, passed not away unheeded by certain of our friends, then abiding in Cambridgeshire. We mean Mr. Dykhart and Mrs. Campion. The more the Vicar considered the surer he felt, that no worthy cause of offence had separated Mr. Campion and his wife. Some strange misunderstanding, or the wicked contriving of some third party, or it might very likely be a combination of the two things, had produced the fatal and long-enduring mischief.

To discover the evil in its cause, and to cure it in its effect; to restore Adela to her husband, and both to their strangely lost child,—had become the hearty desire of Adela's old friend. But her silence on the past stood greatly in his way. He felt himself in this dilemma. He knew not how to shake her resolve of keeping the past a secret, unless by broadly hinting that her compliance might be very important to the well-being of her daughter. At the same time, he shrank from committing himself to the assurance that he had seen and spoken with her daughter, until the mystery which hung over Eva should have been explained away. And who so likely to afford such explanation as Mrs. Campion, if she were herself the mother indeed? Baffled by these entangling obstacles, Mr. Dykhart could only see one way out of them. He must win his friend's further confidence, and lead her on—without hinting what he might disclose in return—to tell him all she knew as to the source and origin of her family misfortunes.

He was not devoid of hope that his own great trouble might in this be an assistance to him. Adela, confessedly owing part of her calamity to some fault, might prefer to confide in some one who knew what remorse was in himself. The very thing which had first carried him to Marlby was a rash act, not quite so guiltless as an accident, which had brought on lasting and painful consequences. Adela was quite aware of all that, and she would naturally expect more sympathy and less censure from one whose life, like her own, was darkened with a shadow of the past. The very presence of the poor imbecile Elwood, whom she beheld

every day, would incline her to confide in one who knew, so painfully and so well, what lasting ruin an unguarded moment may originate. Full of this thought, Mr. Dykhart, who visited Marlby every week, put himself, on every occasion, to the pain of talking of the affair, which had brought him first of all to that asylum.

He had now been three or four times; and he thought Mrs. Campion's manner indicated a breaking-down of her reserve, and a prospect that, sooner or later, she would make those disclosures, from which he expected so much. It was nearly two months since his first acquaintance with the Home. The Leyburns were absent from Bestworth, and the excursions to Marlby were very nearly all the deviations made by our Croxton friend from the routine of his own parish life.

In the early afternoon of Monday, the thirteenth of October, he drove in his gig, with old Mrs. Elwood sitting by his side, to visit again the house that sheltered her afflicted son.

He spent a few hours in company with "Mrs. Wilson;" partly amongst the patients, partly walking in the gardens attached to the Home, and partly (as the evening drew on) in the parlour where their friendship had been so singularly renewed.

"You will want to go early, Mr. Dykhart?" she asked of him, as they ended their walk, and retreated into the house.

"Not unless you are tired of me, Adela," he said. "There is a full moon to-night, and driving home will be easy enough. By the way, there is a total eclipse: I had forgotten."

"Dear me! I am afraid that will oblige you to hurry away."

"No: I see that it will be nearly eleven o'clock before the total obscuration comes on. It will be light enough until after ten. Suppose I set out from here at half-past eight? You can do with me up to that time?"

"I am greatly anxious for you to stay, Mr. Dykhart. I—I wish exceedingly to talk to you. I have made up my mind to say what I hesitated to say before. I am very thankful you can remain."

It had been a sunny day, and the parlour fire had remained unlighted. But it was now kindled; and they had an early tea in the twilight. Then the lamp was brought, and the curtains were drawn, and they sat, the man and the woman, face to face, at the opposite ends of the hearthrug before the fire.

"And now," said Mrs. Campion—"and now, my dear Mr. Dykhart, I have strengthened myself to tell you all that has ever befallen me. I would conceal nothing, nor soften one single circumstance in my favour. Are you as desirous of hearing my story as you seemed to be the other day?"

“As much, or more so, Adela; nay, I am sure that I grow more and more anxious every day that you should confide in me. It is possible—I will say no more—it is *possible* that I might be thereby enabled to further your happiness very greatly. At least, you know how earnestly I would endeavour to do so.”

“Be that as it may, you shall hear my story. I feel as if the confidence which it were a sin against my husband to give to a mere acquaintance, I may rightly give to an old friend—an *old* friend—but one whose constancy I scarcely knew, until I found it proof against all the suspicion which has overshadowed me.”

And then, in a calm, steady tone, and with little interruption on his side, she began the tale of her sorrows and wrongs; and left no mystery unexplained, which she had it in her power to reveal. We presume that the story will have an interest for others besides the original hearer of it; and we set it down as it was spoken in that parlour.

“You will remember, that when my poor father died, he left my sister and myself unexpectedly poor. Dear Julia’s death followed not long after that my father. Mr. Campion married me against the wish of his father, who objected to my want of fortune. There was no downright quarrel between Herbert and his father; but there was a coolness, which was never done away with, up to the latest moment of old Mr. Campion’s life. For one thing, although my husband was the elder son, his father would not allow him a sufficiency whereon to live as a married man in England. Consequently, Herbert was obliged to retain the diplomatic situation abroad, which he had held before his marriage. It was a lucrative one; but it compelled him to live very far away—at Constantinople, indeed. Of course, I was ready to go with him. I do not think that it ever for one moment struck me as a hardship. But the doctor, who had attended me from time to time since I was a girl, stepped in to say that for me to live in Turkey would, very quickly, take away my every chance of living at all; and other medical advice, given by a still more eminent practitioner, entirely coincided with all he said. It was a most terrible blow both to myself and to my husband. But he could not take me into certain destruction; and he could not without certain injury, resign his situation abroad. His father would do nothing to rescue us out of this embarrassment. I should be sorry to make any charge—against the dead, especially—which might not wholly be deserved. But it really did appear to me as if the old gentleman almost enjoyed our difficulty; as if he exulted in so sure a proof that we had not done wisely in marrying, and that Providence had only joined us together, at once to separate us again. However that may have been, my father-

in-law proffered us no rescue out of this cruel dilemma, in which we found ourselves. Indeed, we were afraid of urging our case upon him; for the estate was not entailed, and he might, if he took worse offence, commit the injustice of leaving it to my husband's younger brother, Gerald. I say, the injustice, because my husband had always been brought up with the idea, that inasmuch as he was the elder, the property, as a matter of course, would be his. So, though it seemed very nearly too hard a thing to be credible, there was nothing but for me to make up my mind to part with my husband for nearly a year. And, indeed, if nothing came to our relief, I must expect to suffer the same separation year after year—for how long, nobody could tell. My dear Herbert endeavoured to console me by suggesting every comforting reflection which occurred to him. A few months of the trial, he told me, would be very likely all that would be given us to bear. We were married in June, in the year 1834; and it was necessary for my husband to leave England ere the end of August. In the following June, he said, I might hope to see him again. 'And by that time, Adela,' I think I hear him say the words now, 'by that time, Adela, you may hope to have a companion with you, who will be as dear to you as I am, and who need never go away from you. You don't know how *that* will soften my father. Only let us have such a visitor to cheer us, and I think we need never part again.' So I resigned myself; that is I tried to be not quite despairing; and I looked forward, with even more eagerness than is common, to the time when I should become a mother.

"Well, that time delayed its coming. I was tempted to think it hard that what is given to so many who scarcely desire it, should be denied to myself, to whom, indeed, it was everything. My husband had provided that nothing which could make my life more tolerable should be wanting to me. He placed me in a charming house in Fulham, and heaped every comfort upon me which money could purchase. As I have said already, although dependent upon his profession, he was far from poor, as long as he kept his appointment. Of course, it was proper that I should have some older friend or relation to live with me. And it was arranged that my aunt Anne (my father's sister, you know) should have her home at Scarlington House. I don't know if you remember Lady Anne Somerby."

"I think I do. Had she not a mania for trying all sorts of imaginary remedies for imaginary disorders."

"Exactly so, poor dear old lady! I don't, indeed, think that she had much the matter with her, and I believe she might really have lived a great deal longer (until now, possibly), if she could but have let herself alone. But nothing could convince her of

that. Those caprices of her's—first trying one system and then another—were really the only serious fault she had. But, though I am sure it was very far from her thoughts to injure me, of all persons—her propensity proved really a very great misfortune to me. As I shall tell you presently, it brought me into contact with a person whom (with all my heart) I wish that I had never seen. But, apart from that, my aunt's incessant talk about her ailments, and her symptoms and her remedies, quite tired several of our friends, and kept them from coming to see us. You know how important it was, considering my position, that I should be very cautious indeed, in making any new friends. And so poor Lady Anne's doleful propensity really robbed me, in some measure, of all society. I set this down as a great evil; because it gave me more time for brooding over *my* misfortune,—that of continuing childless.

“My husband came home to me in the month of June, 1835; and remained in England for two months. And so it was the next year; and the year after that. But I must tell you a little of his visit in the latter year,—the year 1837, you know. The great desire of both our hearts was as yet unaccomplished, Any hope which might arise, was sure (it happened to me twice or thrice) to be quenched in bitter disappointment; and it seemed as if Providence had written us down childless. I told you, that until we had an heir to set before my husband's father, it was probable that his death alone would set us free from the cruel necessity of living with the continent of Europe between us. But I began to have terrible fears (and they were not unfounded ones), that the injustice would be continued beyond my father-in-law's death. When my husband came home in the June of 1837, we went together to his father's at Deverington Hall. We went to meet my brother-in-law Gerald, and his bride; for Gerald had lately been married himself. He married a Miss Eliza Vaughan; I cannot say she took my fancy very much, yet I hardly know whether she ever gave me any positive cause for disliking her. It was impossible for me (and you will understand why) not to look upon her as, in a measure, my rival. But when we met at the hall, she was not otherwise than courteous in her behaviour, and she gave up to me, with every outward show of good humour, the precedence that belonged to me as elder brother's wife. One most unlucky day I overheard my father-in-law saying (it was to Gerald he was speaking), that it would be a pity to leave the estate to Herbert, whose wife appeared to have made up her mind never to present him with any children. Imagine how I felt! It was a cruel speech, although, to do him justice, Mr. Campion had no idea of its reaching my own ears. But it

stung me with a bitter sense of injustice, and I never forgot the words."

"But excuse me. What did your brother-in-law say? Did he seek to encourage that idea of his father's?"

"I have no right to say that he did, and perhaps, after all, I should have been wiser in regarding the whole matter as a spiteful jest. My husband, however, did look at it somewhat seriously. He said, 'You must not suppose, Adela, dearest, that I could ever repent of marrying you. *You* are a gain, which nothing possible to befall us could ever turn into a loss. But I should regret if this estate were never to be ours. I do not believe that my father would commit a deliberate injustice. But such things are often done *without* deliberation. Whether what he wishes, and what we wish, will ever befall us, is in God's hands; but to give no needless cause of offence is in our hands. So try, my dear Adela, to humour and soften away his prejudices as much as you can.'"

"My husband's advice was good. But I very much fear I found it too hard to follow. Really I could not bend myself to talk over and conciliate that hard-hearted old man. It was as much as I could do not to show my sense of his unjust and unfeeling disposition. My sister-in-law had, indeed, a great advantage over me there. She was a remarkably lively, conversational woman; and full of all those talents for providing impromptu entertainment which are certainly valuable in their way, and very much so at a rather dull country-house. I don't think it cost *her* any effort to put on a good face before a possible enemy, and truly Mr. Campion was well enough inclined towards her. She had a fortune. It did not, indeed, turn out so much as was expected. But it put me—all but penniless, as I was—at a disadvantage in this respect also. It was not long—not many months—before I was made aware that she was likely to gain the advantage over me in a greater matter still. It was expected that she would shortly gratify Mr. Campion's desire of having a grandchild. It was one of the old gentleman's peculiarities, *not* greatly to prefer a male to a female heir. I imagine he wished that it should be with the Campions, as with many other English families, that they should unite with some house, wealthy and well descended as themselves, and so together blend into a family that should have no superior in the county. Manifestly, this destiny was more likely to be accomplished by a girl than by a boy. But this project of his exactly doubled the danger, that Gerald's child would fairly overthrow my husband's prospects, and win the inheritance for his younger brother. I was most unhappy, and I think I do not flatter myself in saying, more for the sake of my husband than for my own sake. What was most cruel of all, it set me in the light

of one who had ruined my husband in marrying him. It was in the October of that year that I first understood what was in store for my brother-in-law and his wife; and the event, so probably fraught with injustice to Herbert, was expected to take place in the following April.

“I have spoken already of my poor aunt Anne’s caprices as to the medical men she called in. Few could keep her favour for long. But the doctor to whom she showed the most constancy was one whom she had just called in before the time of which I speak. It might be a breach of good faith on my part to tell you his name, so, to keep clear of any such thing, I will him call him ‘Mr. Brown.’ He was then a young man, and I think he was clever. At least, he had the art of talking as if he were. I somehow felt myself drawn towards him. He was a great man for all new methods, and he spoke with much contempt of the bigotry with which his older brethren stuck to their stupid old prejudices. I do not think he was wise in all he said; neither do I suppose that it was all foolish. At that time I was all but ready to believe that his estimate of himself was the true one. I was led on, step by step, to confide in him the whole story of my repeated disappointments; and also of the family matters, which made them doubly significant and disastrous. I was just then flattered once more with the hope which (thrice before) had proved a deceitful one. I asked Mr. Brown, if since he rated so low the skill of ordinary practitioners, he could ascribe to their ignorant treatment the repeated failure of my dearest hopes.

“He was very confident, indeed; and encouraged me to believe that, with his enlightened system, a very different issue to my hopes might now lie before me. I will dwell on this part of my story as little as possible. I put myself altogether in Mr. Brown’s hands. Even when I was made aware that my hopes had left me this time also, I retained my faith in his skill. I followed certain rules prescribed by him, as for my general state of health. And now I come to the most serious and blameable portion of my story. One day (it was within a month of my having begun to consult him), he expressed his decided opinion that the improvement in my constitution, to be expected from his enlightened rules, would end in the crowning blessing by-and-bye. And then he talked of the immense prejudice, against which he, as the reformer of medical abuses, and the regenerator of medical science, was obliged to contend. He said—‘If your friends were aware of the treatment under which you have most wisely placed yourself, they would leave you no peace at all. My poor foolish fellow-practitioners would all but hunt me to death. They would any day rather see a patient die, than hear of his being cured by any way save their

own.' Well, I thought this opinion a rather strong one. But Mr. Brown went on to beg of me that, in writing to my husband, or any other friends, I would make no more mention of my fears or despondency. Rather (he would counsel me) I should write, as if I actually expected that the boon so long deferred was about to be given me. It was the only way, he said, of silencing those prejudiced people, who *would* see nothing but quackery in his method of treatment. Besides, he could assure me that complaining had a reflex action upon the complainer, and was likely to neutralise all the remedies employed. There was at least a show of good sense in this; and I rashly pledged myself to act upon it. In writing to my husband, I simply dropped the subject altogether. I could not have borne to deceive *him*.

"In the few letters I wrote to my father and sister-in-law, I confess with shame that (without committing myself to any positive falsehood) I spoke more confidently of the prospect than I was at that time warranted in speaking. It did not occur to me—as it ought to have done—that the report, as I framed it, would reach my husband through them, and that he would be none the less deceived. I was always thinking of the injustice which my husband's father might be meditating against him; and, as old Mr. Campion was thought to be failing that winter, all might depend on his believing or disbelieving that my husband was likely to have an heir. So I suffered myself—I am bound to acknowledge it—to be led into into speaking deceitfully—directly to my husband's family, and indirectly to himself. I will now come at once to the most remarkable, and (as it proved), the most fatal event in the whole series. Mr. Brown, as I call him, made himself fully at home in Scarlington House. But at that, nobody who knew us was much surprised. It was known to be one of my aunt's eccentricities. Parker, my old servant, was very cross about it, and I think it hurt her when she saw how often I talked with Mr. Brown, while I never confided in her. About the beginning of March (in the year 1838, you know) I was rather unwell. The doctor, who had managed to retain Lady Anne's favour up to this time, was going the way of all her former favourites. She was getting to think that he had mistaken her case, and said that she had heard of a Mr. Progg, who had done wonders in such complaints as her's. As I said, I was myself unwell, and Mr. Brown insisted on my having a nurse. All my hopes of a sounder constitution, with all those precious prospects that went along with it, depended (he told me) on the care to be taken of me at this crisis. Poor dear Parker was quite unhappy, quite hurt, at finding herself put into the background in this way, But my doctor was peremptory, and I had a genuine

belief that he was to be depended on. I did not like the looks of the woman whom he recommended, and I begged him to try and obtain some other person. There was a very nice sort of woman, of the name of Krout, who kept a baker's shop, opposite to Scarlington House—a shop which she gave up the year after, and afterwards came back to it. I wanted to consult her, but Mr. Brown urged me not to talk about it to any stranger. This ought to have made me suspect something. But it did not.

“Well! it was on the *seventh* of March. I have too good a reason for recollecting the day. Mr. Brown had been spending the whole evening with us. Lady Anne was now as fidgetty to get rid of him, as she had formerly been to have him. I was really unwell, but he would have it that my illness was a serious one; he said he had found a nurse to whom there could be no objection, and who would come the next morning, perhaps that very evening. He, himself, should remain all night, as Lady Anne had more than once before asked him to do upon her own account. I had gone to bed early, and the house was quiet, when he came into my room. We had spent the evening upstairs, and not in the parlour which we commonly used. I said something to imply that I thought he was giving himself needless trouble in my case.”

“‘No, Mrs. Campion,’ he said, ‘think of your duty to your husband. Is it just that he should be disinherited, from what is no fault of his or your’s?’

“I said, ‘*Just*, Mr. Brown? You know how bitterly unjust I feel it. You may think that it ought to have amazed me, for this man to come to my room at that time of night, and plunge into conversation about our family wrongs. But I so seldom had the matter out of my own thoughts, that, come as abruptly as it might, no such allusion could ever take me quite by surprise.

“‘Then,’ he said, ‘from what I hear, from those who know the family, I verily believe that if your hopes are not fulfilled before the old gentleman dies, your husband’s younger brother will usurp his place.’

“Now this may have been invention on Mr. Brown’s part, or it may not; very likely it was quite true that such rumours had reached him. You can understand what sort of reply I made. It encouraged him to explain his real intentions at once.

“‘Mrs. Campion,’ he said, ‘you ought not to hesitate at any remedy which lies within your power. In the face of such monstrous injustice, all means whatever are fair ones. If I were a robber come in here to demand your money, and you could baffle me by any sort of deceit, nobody would blame you for doing so. You are in danger of being robbed, quite as unjustly as by any foodpad. Save yourself and your husband by your own wits.’

"I may not have repeated his words exactly, but such they were in substance. He always spoke of my husband as the chief sufferer. He did me the justice of believing that I cared only for *him*.

"I said, 'Save him! But how? What do you mean?'

"Then he spoke out. 'Mrs. Campion, I have smoothed your way, and only a misplaced prejudice of your own can interfere with its success. Surely you anticipate what I am going to tell you. There is a child born this very day, whose birth is a shame and a burden to its mother. Be *you* her mother, and she will save your father-in-law from committing, and your husband from sustaining, a tremendous and irreparable wrong.'

"I said, 'Oh, Mr. La— Mr. Brown, this is dreadful! you would have me impose another person's child on the world and on my husband, as my own.'

"He said, 'But do your husband's family deserve any better? And you do it for your husband's own sake. Remember you will not be striving to gain what is another's, but only to keep what is morally your own.'

"'But,' I said, 'even if I could consent to such a thing, it would be suspected; they are not prepared to hear any such thing about me.'

"'Pardon me,' he coolly went on, 'they *are* prepared. I will candidly explain to you what I have done. I have put you under treatment appropriate to persons not only wishing to be, but actually being in such a condition. And, though they might not expect it so soon, your friends will not be taken by surprise. The woman who has charge of the child, is probably in your garden at this very moment. Let me go and call her in. When I have sent her away, I will go, it is no great distance, and call the nurse of whom I spoke; you now see why I insisted on your having one. Do not thwart all I have done at the last moment. Of course you need not *keep* the child. You can contrive a false report of its death, and send it away. But that will be as you choose, only make it a means of averting the cruel injustice with which your husband is threatened. Think how far he is away, and how dependent in this upon yourself.'

"I have given all Mr. Brown said, as nearly as I can remember, and I say with shame that I had no reply ready for him; and when he proposed to go downstairs, and fetch the child, I did not forbid him from doing so. I heard him go down into that parlour, of which I spoke before. I heard him cautiously open the window and whistle. Something there was in that which made me think what a criminal I was about to become; and I resolved that, nearly as the wickedness might have been approached, it should not stain my conscience, after all. It was not many minutes before

Mr. Brown came upstairs again. He did not bring the child with him; and I retracted the consent which, in a moment of surprise, he might think I had given him. He was disappointed, angry. I somewhat pacified him by telling him that the handsome present I had promised, in case I benefitted by his advice, I would freely give him, if he would abandon the subject now and for ever. It was a promise I could perform; for a little legacy had been left me a year before, and my husband, generous in all things, insisted on my doing what I liked with it. Mr. Brown was not altogether silenced, even by such an offer as that. But he went downstairs. Presently, he came up again.

“ ‘ Well, Mrs. Campion,’ he said, ‘ the matter has been taken out of your hands, and out of mine. The woman who brought the baby has taken it away again. No doubt, she sneaked upstairs, and heard what you said; and she has taken you at your word.’ I said—‘ Thank God! for I fear you might have over-persuaded me, after all.’

“ ‘ And I fear, Mrs. Campion,’ he said, ‘ rather angrily, ‘ that you will live to repent of rejecting my well-meant advice. However, the loss is your own—not mine; except, indeed, that it is a pity you ever trusted me at all.’

“ He left the house the next morning, (late as it was, he could hardly go that night). I gave him what I promised, but I consulted him no more; and as my aunt was already tired of him, he came no more to the house. My friends were led to suppose that my hopes had been blighted as before. For a while all my other thoughts were swallowed up in thankfulness for my having escaped the commission of an actual crime; and I could not resist asking our clergyman to return public thanks for me in church, for a great deliverance, as I worded it (I was very nearly writing it, ‘ a great escape out of temptation’), but that would have provoked too much curiosity. I well remember that there happened to be a strange clergyman in the reading-desk that day; and there was something in the solemn, inquiring tone in which he read the words out, that almost frightened me. He seemed to be calling upon the person so delivered, to come forward and explain the nature of that mercy; but such an idea was, very likely, no more than my own uneasy conscience stirring within me. My aunt Anne did not question me. Just the very day after that memorable night, she missed a letter of my husband’s; and it fussed her with the idea that we had got dishonest servants about us; and I knew at the time that she wrote to worry my husband with this utterly unfounded idea.

“ But before long my whole thoughts were drawn in another and happier direction; and in March, 1839, my dear darling child was born, and I thought I could never know sorrow again. You

may recollect, that that year was a very critical one for the country in which my husband's calling lay—I mean, for Turkey. The present Sultan, a very young man, came to the throne; and people thought that the great break-up of the Turkish empire was really coming at once. The crisis detained my husband at his post, when he might otherwise have come to England as usual; and our little Teresa was more than a year old before he ever saw her. For her size and intelligence, she might have been two years old then, and so her papa said. As it was thought best for the child, I left Fulham, and went to live at Brighton. Everybody that saw her was incredulous of her being so young as she was. But now I come to the saddest and most dreadful part of my story."

At this point, Mrs. Campion paused a little, as if collecting strength. Mr. Dykhart thought it better not to interfere by any words on his own side, so he continued silent, until she went on again, which she presently did.

"My husband's father died about the close of January, in 1842—too suddenly, after all, for Herbert to be sent for in time to see him; but, of course, he was summoned to England with all possible despatch. I was soon informed that the poor old man had not committed the injustice which, it is even possible, he never seriously meditated. He left my husband his heir. I could not affect much sorrow for my father-in-law's death; it released my from a most painful position. My dear husband would now come home for ever, and we should be man and wife, as we had never been before. I awaited his return at Brighton. The funeral, and other like proceedings, were over in Somersetshire, and Gerald and his wife came to Brighton to join me in welcoming Herbert home. Their child was a little girl, and though nearly a year older than Lully (I always called my little Teresa that, she was so much like her aunt), yet little Emily looked the younger of the two. I thought I had now no cause to fear my sister-in-law, and I was glad enough to see her, and she was more cordial with me than ever. My husband would spend a night in London, and come down to me the next day; he came early. I had sent our child for a walk with her nurse, and I was actually sorry that he should not see her the very first moment. She, was indeed, a double blessing to him, for he possibly owed it to her that he was not disinherited. I darted out to meet him; oh—shall I ever forget the terrible shock it gave me? The moment we were alone together he spoke some fearful words. He said: 'Adela, forgive me if I am wrong, and pray yourself to be forgiven if I am right. Have I been deceived in you? Look at this letter'—and he held out before me that letter so unaccountably lost by my poor aunt Anne—'Adela,' he said; that child that was brought into your house three

years ago! Tell me all.’ Now, the thought of that child had always been painful to me. When that woman took it away, I have my fears that she ended by leaving it exposed in the night-air. At least, I heard of a child about that very time being found near Hammersmith. I even sent to inquire, and called afterwards myself. The baby was in the hands of a woman, who said that a gentleman had given it her to nurse. That gentleman I identified (rightly or wrongly) with my Mr. Brown. And in a few months the poor infant actually died. It was a thing of which I could never bear to think. But when I heard my husband allude to that dreadful night; when I saw that he abhorred my duplicity and concealment, (for I had never said a word to *him*), when all that came upon me in the very moment of my expected happiness—then it happened with me as I have already told you. For a time I was *mad*. Not continuously insane, but returning from one delirium into another. I told my sister-in-law all the truth. She hardly seemed to believe me; and, indeed, my story was an improbable one. My husband would not see me again. In a few days more he let me know that what I had acknowledged to him destroyed his happiness irrevocably, and that we should be still more miserable together than apart. You have seen the letter in which he insisted on retaining sole care of our daughter. And you are already aware why I made no resistance to his decree; and, in short, why I am here now ”

And Mrs. Campion’s narrative was ended.

They both sat silent for some time, and then Mr. Dykhart entreated her not to let die within herself the hope, to which he dared not as yet give any definite shape; he thought, with increasing eagerness, of the interview which he and Mr. Ballow intended to have with Mr. Campion, at his return from America, and that return might not be expected not many days hence; Indeed, the Vicar of Croxton had arranged to set himself free from the duties of the very next Sunday. He drove home through the moonlight, with old Mrs. Elwood by his side as before. The shadow of the earth was obscuring the moon, but there was no perceptible darkening of the heavens, until long after their arrival at home. He sat at his window and saw the sight, at which other eyes, far away, were gazing in so much fear and horror. Mrs. Campion considered, as she also looked at the re-appearing moon, that surely the daughter so long divided from her was looking upwards too; but *where*, or in what society, she could not tell. It was a blessing for her that she could not.

CHAPTER XVIII.

RESCUE AND REPENTANCE.

CHELFORD is a quiet town and not very large, therefore no new comer into its upper circles was likely to pass unnoticed, a beautiful young lady least likely of all. Before our heroine had abode there more than a fortnight, she had become the object of much curiosity and inquiry. Mrs. Tarring stimulated the one without satisfying the other. She had a purpose in so doing. It would be well that Eva should glide, rather than jump, into the place and station to which she was probably entitled; moreover, the wider her circle of acquaintance grew now, the more likely that something should occur to set her claims in a clearer light. Somebody who had known the aunt, whom she so greatly resembled, might happen to see her, and might notice and comment upon the strange likeness. This independent testimony, inasmuch as the likeness might form no small portion of the evidence, would be a corroborative not at all to be despised.

The rest of September passed quietly away, and, as far as Eva knew, without anything tending to make her course plainer, or her rights more sure. She was more than content to remain with Mrs. Tarring. Personally, the old lady grew upon her day by day. Then her old nurse, Mary, was now again her constant companion and attendant; and, as they talked from time to time together, circumstance after circumstance came back to Eva's mind, and let more light into those early days which (she had thought) were hopelessly forgotten.

Into Deverington Hall, Miss March (we must call her so a little longer) felt no inclination to enter. The surer her right in respect of it, the more distasteful would be the going into it under any pretence but one. She was not in any danger of forgetting the existence of such a place. Had the house and its inmates possessed no more interest for Eva than a flock of geese, the frequent visits of Miss Varnish would have forced her to give some of her thoughts to it. She caught herself asking again and again, "What brings Miss Varnish here so often? Not any encouragement from Mrs. Tarring, who shows her quite as much dislike as is compatible with due courtesy. Not any special encouragement from myself, who could not encourage a visitor disliked by Mrs. Tarring, although it may be one of the old ladies' eccentricities to delight in telling her of her faults." Besides, Eva was very conscious of somewhat disliking Miss Varnish on her own account, and if her dislike was not so plain-spoken as old Mrs. Tarring's, it could never, by the stupidest, be ever mistaken for liking.

Miss Varnish's conversation turned commonly upon the days of her own early youth. I doubt if the picture drawn of her youthful self was in all points a true picture. But that might be no great thing. Her object was, not to rekindle the light of her own other days, but to entice Eva into a parallel autobiography in return.

This (and it will astonish none of our readers) Eva was not at all inclined to give. And her evasion of Miss Varnish's indirect but searching questions filled the latter lady with suspicion and hope—suspicion that Eva's earlier life contained much of which it was not convenient to talk; and hope that her pretendership to the name of Campion was, after all, an untrue one. For Miss Varnish naturally thought within herself—“If she be entitled to so honourable and desirable a position, why does she delay asserting her claim to it? Is she awaiting the return to England of her presumed father? But if her dependence on him be of so confiding a kind, how comes it that she has not openly shared his station all along?” Miss Varnish thought that, upon the whole, it was more probable that the claim was a false one. This artful girl, or some more artful contriver, who held her as a puppet,—had heard of the scandal which brooded over the Campion family, and had conceived the idea of turning it to great advantage. Mrs. Tarring entertained and countenanced the pretender, most likely with the idea of thwarting Miss Varnish's own designs upon Mr. Campion. Whatever was perplexing about the thing, Mrs. Tarring's motives—Miss Varnish thought—were clear beyond all question. Miss March was an adventuress, an impostor; and her present affair might collapse, as (it was very possible) former schemes had done. But it might none the less interfere with Miss Varnish's own design.

It would be an immense consolation if this beautiful swindler could be detected, before her design had time to so much as ripen; and to entrap her into some self-betraying confession appeared the most likely way of arresting her course. Such was the conviction (somewhat contrary to her first idea), in which Miss Varnish remained for a fortnight or three weeks. You have read that letter of hers, in which, not free from the fear that Miss March might be *no* impostor, she implored M'Quantigan's assistance and advice. You have likewise read his letter in reply, in which he hinted that it was a case for the strongest remedy which ever has been, or can be taken, by one enemy against another.

Utterly unaware that her Irish friend had any reason for caring about Miss March, save his sympathy with herself, Miss Varnish thought he might possibly be bantering her. He could not be seriously advising so desperate and dangerous a step. He was no such devoted lover as to think the scaffold well risked if the hap-

piness of his beloved were made the surer. Poor, unhappy Emma ! She had given to him what ought to have been dearer to her than her life ; and she loved him with a love the warmer, because it was all but hopeless. But no such glamour was over her soul, as to hide from her the knowledge that Murphy M'Quantigan was very selfish. Bewildered by Eva's persistent caution, and gaining no available counsel from the Irishman, poor Miss Varnish began to think that her only wise course was just to take no course ; when, at about the end of the month, some tidings reached her, which revolutionised her thoughts and intentions altogether.

This, as also you know, was the letter from Mrs. Ferrier, enclosing the testimonial to "her niece's" character, which had been sent by the implacable Mrs. Dowlas. Like Mrs. Ferrier herself, Miss Varnish now, in her turn, accepted this letter as true, and absorbed its every statement into her inmost heart. The explanatory letter that Richard's mother sent along with it was not, you may be very sure, of a nature to weaken the evidence of Mrs. Dowlas. Indeed, Mrs. Ferrier hinted that, dreadful as were the enormities of which Llynbwllyn had been the scene, Miss Roberts, *alias* March, had perpetrated crimes, compared to which her Welsh adventures were venial peccadilloes ; nor was Mrs. Ferrier consciously false in saying this. She did, from the bottom of her heart, believe that to have thought of marrying Richard was worse than all Eva's other crimes, even if a murder could have been thrown in amongst them. But her letter, and that of Mrs. Dowlas enclosed within it, gave a sudden and tremendous wrench to all Miss Varnish's views in respect of Eva. It could scarcely now be that she had any claim to be considered a Campion. She was probably but a precocious impostor altogether. To the very name of March she had no rightful pretension. She had relations in rather humble life,—Mrs. Dowlas's style indicated no exalted position,—relations from whom she had absconded, and whom she had basely robbed ; and now, at what she thought a safe distance from the scene of such iniquities, she was going to try a bolder feat of swindling. Perhaps the Campion pretensions were only to be made a means of purchasing goods at Chelford and Bridgewater without the ceremony of paying. Perhaps old Mrs. Tarring—and serve *her* right, at least—would be victimised at the proper opportunity. But there was another fact revealed, and on which Miss Varnish could not reflect so calmly. Miss March had spread her snares, and not quite unsuccessfully, it would seem, for Murphy M'Quantigan ; and Miss Varnish now hated her murderously—murderously ! She easily reconciled this with the same M'Quantigan's proposal to make away with Eva. That proposal she saw to be serious now. Miss Varnish believed, just as Mrs. Ferrier had

understood, that the intrigue in Wales had been carried to the full extent of dishonourable passion. M'Quantigan, in the semi-religious character now assumed by him, had a reputation to maintain, and an exposure might be his utter ruin; and an inevitable exposure was very likely impending. The death of the wretched young woman would alone ensure safety.

Miss Varnish was as indignant with Eva's duplicity, as though her own career had been of the utmost transparency; and as shocked at her depravity, as though she had never forfeited the right of censuring others; and jealousy, above all, made her utterly pitiless. She bent herself in earnest to the contrivances now set on foot for getting rid of Miss March. What those contrivances were, you know in part already, and, as far as may be needed, we will narrate the rest at no very wearisome length.

The plot now set in action required, for its safe execution, the active, though unconscious aid of Eva herself. Therefore, it was needful that Miss Varnish should continue her visits to Mrs. Tarring's house. Therefore, the task of hiding the hatred which might soon be so largely gratified, was imposed on Eva's enemy; and she verily proved herself equal to it.

Eva thought she saw a change in Miss Varnish, when, just about the beginning of October, she paid her one of her now customary visits. She talked less; and, with only one exception, appeared to have laid aside her inquisitive spirit. That exception consisted in her asking Eva whether, while in Wales, she had ever encountered a Mr. Murphy M'Quantigan. At this unexpected question, all the remembrance of that first miserable meeting rushed into Eva's mind. The shame of having so much as believed this man to be her father, for only a few hours, was a matter not lightly to be thrown aside. And Eva made a blushing, hesitating answer, which might imply an affirmative. Miss Varnish naturally beheld in this a confirmation of what she had heard; and as far as depended on her, Eva's fate was already decided. She took the first step in her fearful enterprise before she quitted Mrs. Tarring's house that day. The outlines of the design had been settled, in a carefully masked correspondence between herself and her Orange ally; and the reader knows already what they were. How the details were to be wrought out, we proceed to tell in this place.

"I am quite taken," said Miss Varnish, on the day aforesaid,—
 "I am quite taken with that glimpse one gets of the old church, out of your bedroom window; it sets it in a light which I remember seeing no where else. I have been wondering whether, some day or other, you would let me attempt a slight sketch of the view."

"Certainly, any day you please, Miss Varnish;—now, if you like."

"Oh! thank you, I fear it cannot be to-day; I have not brought my materials; and I doubt if there would be the time. Certainly, it is a beautiful day, and we shall be having the fogs soon. If I had thought you would be so prompt in obliging me—"

"If you really think you would like to take it to-day, I can furnish you with materials."

"Oh, you *are* kind!" answered Miss Varnish, in a tone which (but that it seemed so unlikely a thing), Eva would have said, was one of taunting irony. "You *are* kind, Miss March. Well, perhaps I may have time to do it—let me look at my watch; half-past three. Yes, well there's nothing like doing a thing at once, and I'll take you at your very kind word."

In a few minutes more, Miss Varnish was within Eva's room, and seated at a small table, with pencil and drawing-paper before her.

"Now, Miss March," she said; "you'll not think me rude if I say that I would rather be alone? I'm such a wretched artist, that to have anybody near me would make me too nervous to do a stroke. I shan't allow it to keep me here long."

Separation from Miss Varnish was an infliction not quite too heavy to be borne; and Eva made no objection to leaving her alone. She had but just closed the door behind her, when Miss Varnish laid down the pencil she had taken in her hand, and threw her evil eyes all round the room. It was a room which would bear looking at. But criticism or taste had nothing to do with Miss Varnish's scrutiny. In half a minute more, she stood up on her feet, and stealthily crept to the chimney-piece. There were to be seen on it, amongst a few other trifles, two square-shaped bottles, of rather large size. One of them was partly filled with eau-de-Cologne. The other was, but for a few remaining drops of something, altogether empty. Miss Varnish handled the empty bottle—measured with a strip of paper its thickness and its height, and took especial note of the carving upon it, which was neither profuse nor elaborate.

Then she opened it, and sniffed at its inside. "Lavender water," she said; such (her nose informed her), had been that bottle's contents. Then she laid it where she had found it; went back to the table near the window, and made some pretence of a drawing on her paper. Miss Varnish, without any kind of taste that way, had after a fashion, learnt to draw at school; and she bungled a sort of sketch now. But, as soon as she felt it safe to do so, she quitted the bedroom, and rejoined Eva downstairs.

"I must come again another day," she said, "if you will extend your kindness so far as to allow me. I find the light not good. The afternoon is too far advanced. You really musn't look at what I've done to-day. I'm quite ashamed of it myself—Good-bye."

And Miss Varnish was gone for that day. She had come to Chelford on foot, and on foot she went back to Deverington. On her walk, she considered how her next step should be taken.

“I might not get one altogether like it in Bridgewater,” she thought. “Should I invent some excuse for going to Bath, or even to London, for the thing?”

“No!” she decided within herself, after a moment’s consideration. “No! nothing could be more unwise than to do anything at which people might wonder, and which they might think of when the *other* wonder comes to pass. It can surely be obtained in Bridgewater.”

And to Bridgewater she went the very next day. She purchased a bottle, greatly resembling that of which she had taken such especial notice in Eva’s room. She also bought a small quantity of lavender water.

In a day or two, she again presented herself at Mrs. Topping’s. She brought a small drawing portfolio, with a view to complete her sketch of the church, as beheld from Eva’s own window. This she displayed in the most open manner. She also brought the bottle she had purchased, and which had been rinsed out with the lavender water. This, instead of displaying, she kept entirely out of sight. Once alone in the bedroom as before, she changed the bottles, placing that which belonged to the room in her pocket, and leaving the other in its stead. They were alike in shape and size, but there was a difference in the workmanship. Miss Varnish very carefully compared them, as she made the exchange.

“If,” she thought, “that girl has noticed the bottle minutely, she *may* detect the change. Yet it is a thousand to one that she should. The idea, if it did occur to her, would appear so very absurd. She would, most likely, set it down to a fault in her own memory; and it’s most important that there should be *something* peculiar about the right bottle, and so, indeed, there is.”

Then Miss Varnish made some apology for a sketch, went down stairs to Eva, and complained that her besetting face-ache had interfered with her further progress that day, and sat some time in the drawing-room, with her cheek resting on her hand, in the natural attitude of pain. Some remedy or other was suggested by Mrs. Topping, and administered by Eva; and Miss Varnish went away, hoping that the walk might do her good, which it appeared to do.

On Friday, the 10th of October, she called again, just as Mrs. Topping and Eva were finishing their early dinner. The old lady left the two young ones in the drawing-room by themselves. Miss Varnish announced herself as the bearer of an invitation from Mr. Campion.

"Miss March," she said, "I was speaking to you the other day of the observatory at Deverington. You told me you had seen it already, so I know you must be of an astronomical turn of mind. Now, on Monday next, there will be an occasion for putting the telescope to great use; there is to be a total eclipse of the moon. Mr. Campion said he trusted you would waive all ceremony (considering what an invalid poor Mrs. Campion is), and go there on Monday evening, to view the eclipse through the great telescope. Now, do come!"

There was something that inclined Eva to go, and something which inclined her to stop away. She did feel some curiosity to behold a house which ought very likely to have been her constant home. She did feel a desire to see Mr. Campion, who, with only her parents excepted, must be (as many proofs indicated) her very nearest relation. On the other hand, there might be something underhand in entering with an assumed name the house in which she might so soon be called to live in her real name. But she considered that circumstances, and not her own acts, had thrust the false name upon her; besides, however clear her right to inhabit Deverington Hall might be made, to be Miss Campion for life or for very long, was not exactly according to the programme of her inclination. And then she really would enjoy beholding, with such peculiar advantages, the spectacle preparing in the sky. She did not much like Miss Varnish, but she thought Mrs. Torring's censure of that lady so pitilessly unjust, that to try and like her had almost assumed the aspect of a duty with Eva. So she expressed her thanks for the proffered courtesy, and said she must consult Mrs. Torring.

Miss Varnish looked anxious and alarmed. Again that puzzling wonder flashed through Eva's mind. "What makes my company a matter of such apparent consequence to Miss Varnish?"

But without pursuing the thought any farther, she went in and consulted Mrs. Torring. That lady begged she would act according to her own inclination, and expressed her belief that it would be the better course to go. Now, although life at Chelford was very quietly happy with Eva, it would bear a little diversion; and on the whole the visit to Deverington was rather a pleasant prospect than otherwise; so Eva came back into the drawing-room to say that she would accept the invitation. Miss Varnish said she was truly glad. Nor had she ever spoken with stricter truth in her life.

"Of course," she now said, "you cannot think of going home at night. You will sleep at the Hall? Mr. Campion would not hear of your driving home at such a late hour. It will be nearly twelve before the eclipse will be anything like over."

There was a very good reason for remaining the night at

Deverington, and Eva accepted this corollary to the invitation at once.

“You will come to dinner?” Miss Varnish went on. “I shall call for you between three and four, in the carriage. That will be better than walking. I was tired enough when I got home, the other day, I assure you.”

“By the way,” said Eva, “I hope you have quite got rid of your face-ache.”

“Thank you, yes;” replied Miss Varnish, whose reminder of her last visit had produced the question she wished for; “thank you, quite so, for the present. But I don’t know how soon it may come on again. Your inquiry puts me in mind, Miss March, of a very great favour I was going to ask of you. There is one thing alone which can do my complaint any good, and that thing I really don’t know how to get, except you will give me your charitable help in doing so. By charitable help, I don’t mean money, you know. But it would be a kindness if you would come to my rescue in the difficulty.”

“Certainly, if I can. Pray tell me how?”

“Why, it sounds rather odd; but the only thing which at all relieves me is chloroform. Well, and Mr. Campion has the greatest prejudice against chloroform. I believe he once had a fat friend who was killed by it. But that should hardly alarm such a poor thin creature as I am. However, Mr. Campion, as I said, has a horror of it, and the druggist here, the only man who sells it, is his tenant; and I know, if I went in and bought such a thing, I know that Mr. Ipececk would straightway inform his landlord, and I should have no peace—face-ache or no face-ache. Mr. Campion is the very best of men; yet he has his little prejudices; and it is hard to be cut off from my only remedy.”

“Very hard, indeed,” said Eva, with as genuine a sympathy as her companion could have desired. “Then you would wish me to buy it for you? I will, with pleasure.”

“If you will really be so very kind, perhaps you will come out with me now. I have some shopping to do besides.”

Eva went upstairs and put on her things. Before they were out of doors, Miss Varnish pulled out the square-shaped bottle, wrapped up in paper, only with the stopper uncovered and free.

“Please get this filled with chloroform, and it will last me a good long while. Here is the money—enough, I know—put it into your purse; pockets are so unsafe. One thing I must implore of you; not to tell this to Mrs. Tarring, nor to what’s-her-name—Patterson—the old lady’s so malicious, she’d like to give me face-ache to all eternity—I know she would.”

“Oh, you don’t understand Mrs. Tarring, I’m sure. She would

never hurt a single creature, with all her sharpness of tongue. But I needn't say that neither she nor anyone else shall ever hear a word of it."

"Thank you exceedingly, Miss March. You'll relieve me of I don't know how much suffering; and perhaps I may one day have the power of doing you a kindness in return."

They then went out into the town, and Eva, leaving her companion at the draper's, went herself to the druggist's, and purchased the chloroform, as desired. She put the bottle into Miss Varnish's hands, and, before long, they parted for that day. It was customary at Deverington Hall for one of the servants to go to Chelford every Saturday. On the day after Miss Varnish's visit, as just described,—a paragraph in the *Standard* caught her eye. After musing over it for some minutes, she took a pair of scissors, and cut it out. Then, having rapidly dashed off a letter, she folded it in an envelope, together with the newspaper extract. She did it hurriedly, for the usual time for the Saturday's expedition to Chelford was all but come: and Mr. Campion was apt to grow very fidgetty and inquisitive, when household matters were in any way delayed; to provoke curiosity, or to give rise to the idea that any scheme was on foot, was just about the most imprudent course for Miss Varnish to take. So, to avoid any such thing, she caught hold of the first envelope which came to hand. It was a somewhat transparent one, and showed the printed characters within it. But could they have been read letter by letter, they would not have been likely to provoke suspicion in themselves.

She had been told by Mr. M'Quantigan thenceforth to address her letters to him, at Mrs. Ferrier's; which she did in this case; and she accompanied the servant, in order to post it at Chelford.

"There may be, or there may not be," she thought, "a Sunday delivery at Leamington. But even if there is not, he will most likely get this before he starts on Monday morning."

How this letter missed the person to whom it was directed, and came to be opened by Mrs. Ferrier instead, is known to our readers already.

On Monday afternoon, at the set time, Miss Varnish came in the carriage for Eva. The few things that Miss March required for the night were already packed, when her assiduous friend called. Miss Varnish reminded her that the treat of the evening would involve a short nocturnal walk, to and from the observatory; and counselled her to take the warmest wrapping her wardrobe afforded.

"Come now," she said; "let me go upstairs with you, and give you my advice what, of all your things, you had best take."

Upstairs they went together, and, at Miss Varnish's recom-

mentation, the choice was made. Then they went down, and having bade a good morning to Mrs. Torring, were about to enter the carriage.

"Bless me!" Miss Varnish suddenly exclaimed. "How stupid and careless I am! I've left one of my gloves in your room. Let *me* go and get it. You won't know where it is. Please just see that the things are safely placed in the carriage."

And the wily Emma scampered upstairs into Miss March's bedroom. She had verily and indeed left her glove there. She had left it on the mantelpiece, where stood the two square-shaped bottles. She snatched up the glove, poured the eau-de-Cologne out of the bottle which contained it, into that bottle she had purchased and placed there herself; and then popped the latter bottle into her bag, placing on the side where it stood, that bottle just emptied into it. But for this process, it might be too apparent, that the bottle supposed to be taken to Deverington by Eva, had been an *empty* one. Miss Varnish ran downstairs to the carriage, uttered some penitential remarks on her own forgetfulness; and they drove off on their way to Deverington. She had arranged to call for Eva, be the weather what it might; for, as she justly said, there was, in any case, a hope of its clearing up in time for the eclipse in the evening. But it was a very bright, still day, and promised an uninterrupted view of the spectacle preparing.

Eva would, perhaps, have meditated somewhat curiously on the origin and nature of Miss Varnish's feelings towards her. Only now she had other ideas to fill her brain. She needed some presence of mind to enable her to meet, as an utter stranger, one whom she had every reason to regard as a near relation. Perhaps there would be something about her to arouse his curiosity and suspicion. Eva could only hope that it might not be so. With such thoughts, she reached Deverington Hall. It was a comfortable, well-arranged house inside; but I do not know that there was anything in it calling for particular mention. If Miss Varnish had been assiduous in her attentions to Eva at Chelford, she was something more at Deverington. She not only insisted upon showing the new guest her room, but would remain with her, and assist her in placing out her things for the night. Eva got over her introduction to Mr. Cammion pretty well. Apparently nothing in Miss March's

adjourned to the observatory and beheld the sight, which the unclouded sky afforded them to perfection. At about half-past eleven they went in. Some supper rewarded their long and patient devotion to the mental appetite; and the vicar and his consort took their leave. Shortly after midnight, the whole house was going, or gone to rest. The situation of Eva's room it is fitting we should describe.

It was at a considerable distance from that occupied by Miss Varnish, and stood near the head of a somewhat narrow staircase, that led to a glass-door opening into the Italian garden. Inside the bedroom was a large closet, or small chamber, (whichever you might like to call it), and the key fastening the lock was on the bedroom side of the door. Eva was at once weary and wakeful; weary with the long evening, and wakeful with the many thoughts suggested to her by the strange coincidence of her finding a lodging in that house, of all others. She felt herself alternately dozing, and waking again—she knew not how many times—until she fancied that some strange presence was in her room. She was awake enough to be conscious of it; not awake enough at once to detect the truth or the fallacy of her imagining. But presently, the haunting phantom took shape as well as sound. A face was looking into her own. Was it a face ever seen by her before? Was it the face of Mr. Murphy M'Quantigan? It was Murphy M'Quantigan's face, indeed. Murphy M'Quantigan's face, with the sanctimonious mask torn away from it. There was now quite another look upon that face. It was a look which Eva had never seen before, on any countenance which had gazed into hers. But she was aware at once what that look portended. It needed not the murderous attitude of his *hands* to interpret *that* look.

It was exactly at this instant, that Mrs. Ferrier, guided by the lamp which threw its yellow rays on the stairs, along with the whiter streaks of moonlight, found her way into this very chamber.

She saw the man, whom she had taken for her trusted agent, bending over the bed, and commencing his horrid work in the way which Miss Varnish's letter had prepared her to anticipate. On the table, hard by the bed, stood a square-shaped bottle, with the stopper removed. In one and the same moment, Mrs. Ferrier threw the bottle crashing to the ground, and with a cry of horror and fear arrested the murderer in the work he had already begun.

It was startling enough to find himself interrupted in a deed towards which, as he thought, his way had been smoothed beyond all possible interference. But when he looked round, and saw who had come so suddenly upon the scene; when he saw the very woman from whom he not only believed himself separated by more than a

hundred miles, but on whose very behalf he was doing the deed ; the astonishment utterly prostrated him, and he knew not what he should say, nor what he should do. Bewildered more than on any former occasion of his life, he rushed out of the room at once ; but not by the door at which he had entered it.

Mrs. Ferrier turned, in an agony of anxiety, to the bed on which the intended victim was lying.

“ Miss March ! Speak to me, for God’s sake ! Tell me if you are hurt ! Oh ! have I come too late, after all ? ”

Eva was not hurt. The fumes of the chloroform, which the ruffian had forced her to inhale, had not had time so much as to take away her senses, still less to take them away beyond recovery, and she was now broad awake.

“ No, I am not hurt at all. Can it be Mrs. Ferrier ? ”

“ Yes, indeed ; I am that guilty, miserable woman. Oh, Miss March, I have given you but little occasion to look upon me as a friend, I bitterly, bitterly know ! But, indeed, as I hope for mercy after all, I am come to save you now ! ”

“ But what is it ? What was it ? I dreamed just now that a strange man had come in. ”

“ Oh, it was no dream of yours. Heaven pity and forgive me ! It was no dream. He has just gone out at that door. ”

“ *That door ?* ” asked Eva, her eye obeying the direction of Miss Ferrier’s finger. And then, a sudden impulse suggesting the safest course, she sprang off the bed, and turned the key in the door by which Mr. Murphy had darted into the inner room. A loud and deep curse from within bore witness to the wisdom of her hasty action. On the table the Irishman had laid a life-preserver. This Eva took into her hands.

“ Shall we alarm the house ? ” she said to her deliverer.

“ Yes ;—oh, stay ! no, no ! Let us get out of it as soon as we can. You have more enemies than one in this house, I know, If you do not distrust me too much to go with me—and I well deserve you *should*—let us go quietly away. I can show you how ; and I have a gig in waiting that will take us to Bridgewater. Let us get quickly out of this murderous place. ”

“ Don’t be afraid, Mrs. Ferrier ; we are two women, and there is help at hand. But I would rather not remain here. I will go with you at once. ” And, after a very hasty toilet, Miss March was ready to accompany the elder lady out of the house. A few growling curses were heard at intervals from the large closet ; but otherwise the prisoner gave no sign. Mrs. Ferrier was horribly afraid of meeting a second enemy on the stairs. But nothing of the kind occurred, and they went out of the house as one of them had lately entered it. They found their way through the shrub-

bery and into the wood. At the gate the gig was waiting as desired.

"I must take this young lady with me somehow," Mrs. Ferrier said; "but I do not mind what I pay you."

The gig was a broad one, and would contain three without any great inconvenience. So they were presently all seated in it, and the driver inquired which way they purposed going.

Mrs. Ferrier consulted Miss March, who declared for Chelford. So to Chelford, and not to Bridgewater, they went. Mrs. Ferrier had horrid fears as to the desperate steps to which their baffled enemies might even now betake themselves. But they drove on without interruption. The whole interval between Mrs. Ferrier's arrival at that gate in the wood, and her return with Miss March, had not comprised more than fifteen minutes. They drove to Chelford, and stopped at the Calf's Head, the most respectable inn of the place.

"Ask for a room, or rooms for the night," said Mrs. Ferrier to the driver. "Tell them we will give any money, if they will but take us in."

So the landlord, and landlady, and inferior functionaries of the inn, were knocked up, and a room was got ready. If the people grumbled a little at so unwonted a summons at half-past one in the morning, I only know that they did not grumble when Mrs. Ferrier took her leave on the following day. The driver, after his adventurous expedition, was dismissed in a way which made the phenomenon of a lunar eclipse a joyful remembrance for all future time. At last, Mrs. Ferrier and Eva were alone in the room in which a fire had been lighted, and on the sofas of which they would pass the night.

"Let us now thank God," Mrs. Ferrier said, "for having saved you from a fearful death, and me from a dreadful crime."

And they paid the tribute of their thanks together; after that they fell into conversation.

"Now, Miss March," said Richard's mother; "I must tell you all the deep, deep guilt, which attaches to me. It is true, I never intended so horrid a thing as was all but perpetrated an hour ago. But I have been fearfully wicked, nevertheless, and I deserve to forfeit the esteem of every good person, and the affection of my son, which, indeed, I fear is lost to me for ever."

"Oh, no, indeed, Mrs. Ferrier. *There you are* mistaken."

"Richard *will* abhor me, when he hears all I have now to tell you. Unless—unless, indeed, you could be so much more merciful than I deserve, as to refrain from telling him."

"Mrs. Ferrier, I should never like to promise concealment from *him*. But there is surely another alternative. You need not tell

anything to me, and then I shall have nothing to conceal from him."

"Oh, if I could be silent! But I dare not. I feel as though nothing but a full confession could atone for my exceeding guilt."

"Believe me, Mrs. Ferrier, you would inflict great sorrow upon me, in saying anything which forced me to be a barrier between yourself and—and Richard. I think I know all for which you have any cause to blame yourself. You were opposed to Richard's intentions. There's not a mother in the world, who would not have sought much better things for him. You were led to confide your feelings to some one who traded on your confidence, and whose own evil thoughts impelled him to imagine everyone as wicked as himself. And, as soon as you saw how atrociously your trust had been abused, you did your utmost to prevent any mischief;—and, as you see, you entirely succeeded."

"Indeed, that is true, Miss March. Indeed, all that, in substance, is the whole truth. And can you really forgive my bitter opposition to your happiness?"

"Oh, Mrs. Ferrier, how unreasonable it would be in me to think that such a thing was likely to be welcome to you! But I hoped all along I might show you in time that I was at least endeavouring not to be quite unworthy of him."

"Well, Miss March; this to me has been a night of great and undeserved mercies. Never, I would hope, will it be remembered by me, without my thanking the Great Deliverer of all. But I owe some thanks to you for your forbearance, beyond my utmost deserts. Will you, now, come home with me to Leamington to-morrow; and let me send for Richard to join us?"

Eva said she would joyfully accede to the plan; if Mrs. Tarring would but consent to a parting somewhat sudden and uncere-
monious; and then they had much more conversation. Eva explained who Mr. M'Quantigan was, and whence had arisen that intercourse, which had been so hastily and maliciously interpreted by Mrs. Dowlas. She also explained what had inspired that lady with such angry feelings; and Eva ventured so far, as to hint that she had a hope—a certainty she dared not yet call it—that, in point of birth, she might prove no unworthy wife of Richard. Mrs. Ferrier could only say, again and again, that she had now no other wish than to show her sorrow for the past misunderstanding.

At an early hour next day, they called upon Mrs. Tarring. She jumped at once to the conclusion, unwarranted as yet by any positive evidence, that that Miss Varnish was at the bottom of it all. Mrs. Ferrier confessed to the old lady how averse she had been to her son's connection with Eva, and how greatly she longed to atone for her unjust dislike. Mrs. Tarring roundly told the lady

that she had acted like a great fool ; but she offered no obstacle in the way of her present wishes.

An affectionate leave was taken by Eva of Mrs. Torring, and a yet more affectionate one of Mary ; and they drove together to the station shortly after ten o'clock. While they were taking their seats, they heard one or two persons on the platform discoursing, in a somewhat animated tone, upon some unknown event which had happened at Deverington Hall. Eva guessed that her sudden departure had provoked notice and curiosity, and very glad she felt that she was at once to be borne away out of that ominous neighbourhood. Yet her guess was a wrong one. Not her departure, but a departure of another and more striking kind had been the news of that morning. Something had happened at the Hall, which left no wonder to spare for her really unaccountable behaviour. But the train was on its way, ere yet she could discover her mistake.

Mrs. Ferrier is a happy woman now. And anybody who became the enemy of Eva would find in her mother-in-law, the very fiercest opponent (except Richard) that could be given him. And that night of the total eclipse has no more prolonged its shadows on her spirit, than the shadow of the earth could continue to obscure the brightness of our moon.

But it left its traces on her mortal body, notwithstanding. She went out of that terrible night with her hair as white as snow.

"CUT UP"

HAVE any of my readers ever given way to the desire of invading the sacred treasure cave of literature, and suffered, in consequence, the same treatment as Cassim did at the hands of the forty thieves, viz., being cut to pieces by the lawful occupants and placed in a conspicuous place as a warning and example? Or even, if haply they have not yet ventured so far, but have restrained their *cacôthes scribendi* within the safe limits of manuscript, without aspiring to the perilous delights of print—in either case let them listen to my "littel tayle" and lay it sadly to heart.

Hitherto the victims of reviewers—their name is Legion—have brooded in sullen silence over their wrongs; hitherto the veil of mystery has concealed their writhing agonies, and the bitterness of their heart of hearts. That silence I am about to break—that veil I am about to raise. As did the scattered limbs of the holy Gengulphus coalesce, and re-unite at the word of power—so I—I *who have been cut up*, am about to summon together my mangled pieces—the brain that thought—the eyes that read—the hand, ah me! that did the fatal deed. Once more shall they meet in loving union, no more, indeed, to offend, but rather to reveal the mysteries of the torture-room, to depict the anguish of one who has suffered from the reviewer's scalpel, and warn others off a dangerous ground—the hunting-fields of Anthropophagi.

Some time since a certain daemon whispered to me, not "have a taste," but "write a book." Up to that moment I cannot say that I had been altogether innocent of print, but I certainly had not perpetrated anything requiring the binder's art. A charming little monograph of "Potichomanie," in a pea-green cover, and "A Few Thoughts upon Shakespeare's Fools," with two misprints in the title-page, lie before me at the present moment. The publisher's little bill for the same is somewhere in my desk also. But, to a real 3 Vol. 8vo. book, my wildest thoughts had not as yet reached until that fatal whisper was breathed into my ear, goading me on to shame and agony. To hear was to obey; the spark fell upon materials, alas! only too ready for combustion. There was a fatal ease, a seducing facility, about the first step; and yet, too late, I found that in a certain sense it was indeed the *premier pas qui coute*. Before long I found myself possessor of a ream of hard cream-laid, wire-wove paper, a quart of "Imperial black writing fluid," and a hundred of the very best quill pens. I say designedly "possessor," and not master; for, in truth, they altogether mastered and dominated me. The ink contented itself with upsetting, bedaubing my fingers and attracting to its sable pool suicidal flies,

and foreign bodies. The pens drove me within an ace of delirium, by manifesting a really diabolic power of spluttering, splashing, making holes, losing themselves, spelling wrongly, writing nonsense, and sometimes striking work altogether. As for the paper, I should not have imagined a plain blank sheet of cream-laid capable of the insane suggestions, the terrible insinuations, the insulting sneers, that I found to my cost in each sheet of my ream. I appeal to any author, successful or otherwise, who may read this paper,—I appeal to him, I repeat, as to whether there is not something menacing and horrible about the fair blank sheet lying on the desk, as if to tempt to ruin. I found it so; nay, at times, as I placed a fresh page on my desk, it would seem actually to grimace at me scornfully with aerial features, even while pretending to be my abject slave. The reader will observe that the composition of my work of fiction was the least of my troubles. To this day I attribute my mangling and dismemberment entirely to certain demoniacal agencies at work in my materials. It was a triumph of the *hylic* over the *psychic* principle, and has made me ever since an unwilling Manichæan in my belief. In the construction and development of my plot, the distribution and action of my characters, and the working out of the Nemesis, all went well. There was a little difficulty, every now and then, in knowing what to make my characters say and do; but, after all, one meets with that in real life, so this only proved my regard for truth and reality. Then, too, there was a high moral inculcated—a due mingling of the serious and the jocose—a great amount of the improbable, and a total absence of anything actually impossible, and there was only one serious mistake in my plot, which I did not discover until it was in the press. When to this is added, in the article of characters, a hero of correct church principles, a heroine of equally correct principles, who supports an aged mother and idiot sister by the efforts of her brush, and lets her lover down from a window, eighteen feet from the ground, by her back hair, which is red; an amiable maniac, who kills his father with the best intentions; a rich uncle; a cruel step-mother; a jocose landlady, and an accomplished and hardened bigamist,—is it not evident, I say, that my novel contained all the elements of success, and that its subsequent misadventure, and my consequent sufferings, were caused solely and entirely by the pens, ink, and paper to which I have referred? All readers who are not reviewers will answer "Yes." At length the MS. was completed; twelve hundred pages of caligraphy, calculated to print down into the regulation size, 3 vol. 8vo., 300 pages to each volume. With trembling hand I built up the goodly pile, with mingled pride and wonder did I proceed to print upon its uppermost page these magic words—"Up in the Clouds, a Novel in Three Volumes, by

Simple Simon." This *nom de plume* was a little joke of mine; it is now my only consolation in that awful transaction. Never, never shall my real name appear in print, and the Editor of this magazine is bound by a portentous vow never to reveal my incognito. Since the publication of that fatal book, it has been the object of my life to conceal all traces of Simple Simon in the cut-up and dismembered wretch who pens these lines, impelled by a sense of duty. I have had as many Avatars as Brahma. I have changed as often as the moon or Proteus. I have shrunk from signing my name, lest my handwriting should be recognised. I had even to be threatened before I would fill up my census-return. Should my efforts prove unavailing, I am determined not to survive the event. After a due period of suspense, I heard from Messrs. Faust and Caxton, to whom the previous MS. had been entrusted. Their answer was satisfactory, their engagements would allow them to undertake its publication upon certain terms. What those terms were I will never reveal. Had merit been recognised all would have been well; as it is, my banker knows the result. I pass over the process of publishing—the pleasures of proof-revising—the little extra expenses for "bad copy" and "author's corrections"—the agonies of reading my high and glowing thoughts travestied into mere gibberish. At length there came an end; the last proof was revised—the colour and pattern of the binding chosen. The *Times* announced as "Just ready, at all the Libraries, Up in the Clouds," &c.; and within a week of that event the Parcels Delivery cart brought a compact little heap of volumes, bound in azure blue with gold lettering and devices. My heart's desire was accomplished. I hastened to seize upon a triad of volumes, to cut number one with loving hand, as Izaak Walton handled his frog, to esconce myself in an easy chair to read—to admire—to applaud. Yes, this was my work; unto this had I come, and who should define the limits of the future to me? I speedily imagined a second edition—crowded libraries—Mudie besieged; a third edition quickly following, with portrait of the author, *posed* after that famous picture of Montgomery described by Lord Macaulay. Then that third edition, darkly shadowing forth future works, fresh triumphs, new successes, as the last king in Macbeth's vision mirrors the future glories of his race. My fool's paradise lasted exactly ten days, during which I starred it among my friends and relatives as the author of "The last new novel." I was liberal in the gift of copies, with my autograph attached. I sent one to the village library, and, for fear that the claims of the Bodleian and British Museum might have been overlooked, I went so far as to direct a copy in my hand with a complimentary note. It is true that there were one or two drawbacks. Kind

friends "thought it only right" to point out to me one or two blemishes. I had slightly confused my dates, and made my hero witness an event before he was born. I had made the Russian precede the Sikh war, and had changed my heroine's name from Clara to Ellen without any apparent cause. There were several ridiculous misprints—mere "literals," as I assured my kind advisers. Still, "fiend" for "friend," "which" for "witch," "tooralooral" for "tolerable," and "crutch" for "church," do not add to the intelligibility or the appearance of a work of fiction. However, the information was well meant; so I thanked and hated my friends accordingly. For ten days was I enthroned like any Cæsar in my domestic circle. I issued my edicts—I raised—I cast down literary reputations; and all seemed fair and bright before me. As a literary man, I need scarcely say that I was in the habit of studying the whole tribe of magazines and reviews in which new books are noticed. Daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly, all found their way to my library-table, to be pursued in due order; but among them I had a favourite—the *Weekly Satirist*. Its genial hearty tone, freedom from bitterness and prejudice, courteous regard for the feelings of authors and the weakness of general humanity, together with the total absence of anything resembling hypercriticism, sneering or unfair inference, had always rendered its reviews of new works specially agreeable to me, and made it a welcome adjunct to my breakfast-table on the day of its publication, towards the end of the week. It is true that once or twice I had seen the works of friends somewhat roughly handled; but then, had they not brought their fate upon themselves by their miserable temerity and ridiculous conceit? What business had they, forsooth, in print? Let them give place to those men of certain merit, who knew their powers and their deserts. At length the day came, the fatal day on which I rose a man, "*totus teres atque rotundus*," and before night had become a mangled miserable object.

"Jacet ingens litore truncus

Avulsumque humeris caput et sine nomine corpus."

I descended to the breakfast-room, on the table of which, opposite my chair, there lay a trim little bundle of letters and papers, and at the bottom the *Weekly Satirist*. How well I remember smiling pleasantly upon it; coquetting with my various correspondents, flitting from letter to paper, and paper to letter, and deliberately keeping my *bonne bouche* to the last. Then the fated moment arrived—my renewed tea-cup stood on my right hand, to which I might from time to time apply. I seized the paper in my left, the knife in my right, and with a gentle sigh of intense pleasure, proceeded to cut into the crisp pages. If you ask me what

were my feelings then, I can only compare them to those of a newly-elected member of the Academie when his introducer commences the customary eulogistic speech. In one moment more I should take my seat among those worthies, on whom the *Satirist* has conferred immortal renown. H'm—ha! political article on Reform—State of Europe—Our New Ironclad: very good and sound indeed. What comes next? Essay on Fogies, another on Social Science, another on Growing Fat—excellent keen wit and light satire, quite as good as La Bruyere. H'm—Reviews: Bloxall's Gothic Architecture," "Schmidt on the Vowel Points." What's this? "A Novel in nubibus." How very odd: more light satire; I dare say, very well deserved. "Who is the author?" thought I, referring to the foot-note. There it was, "Up in the Clouds. A Novel. 3 vols. Faust & Caxton: London." The blood flew up to my face, my forehead, my ears, till they tingled; then it rushed back to my finger-tips, and my heart, which had been beating furiously, seemed to stop quite still with a thud. I read it; yes, I read it, until the lines sprang up and down, the letters and words performed diabolic dances, the capitals sparkled like rockets, and the small type like squibs. I read on till my face burned, and my eyes swam, and my head opened and shut with a bang. I read on to the end; then I placed the deadly paper on the table, and gazed across it at my wife with possibly the worst and most fatuous attempt at a smile that ever was seen. I promised to describe my feelings; but how? words, epithets, comparison fail me. Reader, have you ever received a severe shock from an electrical eel, then been scourged with a cat-o'-nine-tails twisted with wire; then been well rubbed with cayenne, chili vinegar, and mustard; then half roasted, then parboiled, then stuck full of fish-hooks, and, lastly, flung into a dirty horse-pond? You say, No. Well, I endured all that, and more: there, in my own house, and in my own library-chair, did I suffer such "pinches, nips, and bobs" as Lady Jane Grey could not imagine. My nose was tweaked, my whiskers pulled, my face slapped, dirt cast on my head, dirt thrust in my mouth, and all by invisible hands. In ten minutes were concentrated all the woes of a lifetime—yes, a Methuselah's lifetime. I felt myself shrivel and grow old. I became neuralgic, dyspeptic, and my tooth began to ache. And all this was effected by two columns and a half of the *Weekly Satirist*. Finally, I seemed to fly into pieces like a Venice glass, and I knew that I had received a "cutting up." How I escaped from the room and the house, I know not. I wandered wildly along the streets, but only to see the fatal paper—the deadly article—in every bookseller's shop. I felt in that state that the Indians call "all face." It seemed to me that every one knew my treatment. I am sure that nearly

every one in the street turned round to look at me, and on their faces I read the words, "He has been cut up!" The bells of some church began to ring, and their *carillon* ran, "He has been cut up—he has been cut up!" till I was nearly maddened. The costermongers, and buy-a-brooms, and hardware men, all repeated the same. There was no escape. I saw a friend advancing towards me, on his face condolence, and I fled madly—only to fall into the arms of another, who bid me cheer up, and remember poor Keats. At length I tottered home, and feebly wrote to my publishers, begging them to recal the edition. That evening I received an intimation that they should regard such an act as a violation of my contract, and take legal measures against me. Like Cornelius Agrippa's apprentice, I had raised a demon whom I could not lay. Why prolong the harrowing narrative? why dwell on my miseries. Go where I would, I found that miserable review; it clung to me like the poisoned garment of Deianira. In the train, strangers presented it to me with a smile and a bow, and I had to simulate laughter at my own dissection. At home, my wife consoled me, which was bad; the servants tittered, which was worse; and my friends either pretended to ignore the review altogether, or to condole with me on my treatment. At length, to prevent myself from becoming altogether insane, I left my native land, and exiled myself for months, having previously buried, in my back garden, the miserable cause of all my woes. After months of absence, I returned, a shattered wreck, enfeebled alike in mind, health, and purse, and, like Othello, my occupation gone. Need I say that I have never published since then—nay, more, that I never read anything more exciting than the back numbers of the *Penny Magazine*? This is the first time since my return that I have grasped a pen, save, indeed, to fill up and sign a cheque for the expenses of publication—or, in other words, of being cut up—and I only do so now from an imperative feeling of duty. Finally, beloved reader, accept two pieces of advice as from one who has suffered. Should fate ever bring you into the presence of a critic or reviewer, let no false shame deter you—take him aside to a convenient spot, divest yourself of rings, pins, studs, sleeve-links, watch and chain, abase yourself, and grovel before him; become his bond-slave, and, if necessary, offer to settle your whole estate in fee simple upon him, on condition, *not* of being praised, but

AMERICAN BOARDING-HOUSES

ALMOST every traveller in the United States of America has had something to say respecting the hotels of that country: but I am not aware that anyone had made mention of the boarding-houses—it may be because few persons who have “taken notes” respecting the social and domestic habits and customs of our trans-Atlantic cousins have been permanent residents in the States, and, as mere passing travellers, they have, as a matter of course, and almost of necessity, put up at hotels during their stay, in whatever part of the country they have visited.

As wide a difference, however, exists between the ordinary arrangements of American and English boarding-houses, as between the respective hotel systems of the two countries. The hotels of the United States (I use the terms America and United States indiscriminately, to avoid tautology), in the estimation of all who value display, orderly arrangement, free social intercourse, regularity, and economy with good-living, and who care little, while travelling, for quietude and domestic privacy,—are, as a general rule, preferable to those of this country, while—also as a general rule—the boarding-houses of America, are, in many respects, less desirable places of residence than those of England, though the boarding-house arrangements vary somewhat in different states. Of course, hotels and boarding-houses are in America, as elsewhere, of different classes; but in America, generally speaking, all classes are conducted in accordance with certain fixed regulations, unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians.

It would be a difficult matter for a traveller to “take his ease at his inn” in the United States—according to the English meaning of the phrase, since any one of his fellow-lodgers in the great caravansera would consider himself entitled, or privileged, to intrude upon his privacy, whensoever he felt inclined, unless indeed, he chose to lock himself up in his bedroom, while even to that the chambermaid would have a pass-key; but in an American boarding-house—unless he make special arrangements, and in many houses such arrangements would not be permitted, the resident would find that to take his ease, according to his own good will and pleasure, would absolutely be impossible. There is no such thing as coming down to a late breakfast after sitting up—perhaps sitting, or otherwise occupied, until far into the small hours of morning, for in all American boarding-houses, from the highest to the lowest class, meals are served at a certain specified hour, in a room especially appropriated to that purpose, and when that hour

comes round—sure as inexorable fate—the gong resounds through the house, and the boarder who does not appear at the table must expect to wait, no matter how craving his appetite, until the next meal is served.

If he make his appearance even half-an-hour later than the specified time, he will either find the table cleared of everything eatable or drinkable, and the “helps” busily employed in washing up the things, or “fixing” the room, or else the aforesaid “helps” will be seated at the table themselves, occupied in consuming the *debris* of the meal. In the latter case, he may, if it so please him, seat himself with them, and partake of whatever he can get, though they will be displeased at the intrusion, and will not hesitate audibly to express their displeasure. In neither case can he hope to have a fresh meal prepared for himself alone. Such an idea would never enter the heads of mistress or maids, and the boarder would be regarded as verging upon insanity who would suggest such a thing of his own accord; and as to a bit of supper at night in his own room, he may purchase it ready cooked for himself if he pleases, and find his own cookery, knives and forks, &c., but the boarding-house mistress would never think of indulging him in any such nonsense.

In fact, the regulation which specifies certain settled hours for meals is almost religiously adhered to throughout the United States, whether in hotels or boarding-houses, with this difference, *viz.*, that in the hotels, in the larger towns* and cities, the traveller may procure a meal at any hour by paying exorbitantly for the accommodation, while in the regular boarding-houses the “eating-room” is “fixed up” after each meal, and preparations are immediately made for the meal that is to follow; and after the regular meal-hours of the day are over, the cupboards and warders are locked, the boarding mistress retires to her own private apartments to enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*; the “helps” walk abroad to visit their friends, or occupy themselves with their own amusements or employments, and nothing edible can be obtained but love or money.

This regulation applies generally to hotels and boarding-houses throughout the Union, from Maine to Florida, and from New York to California, though in the cities and populous villages, beyond the trouble and discomfort of going out when one is perhaps unwell or fatigued, it is of little consequence, since the restaurants are numerous and are open at all hours of the day or night, and

* I should write “villages or cities,” since, in the United States, the word “town” implies what we term a “township.” A settlement in America becomes in course of time a village, and when the population has increased to number 10,000, the village is incorporated and becomes a city.

in these places viands of any and every description can be obtained at a moment's notice, or rather, I should say, to order.

In the country parts it is otherwise: I have arrived after meal hours at a solitary "hotel" in the wilds of Wisconsin, hungry and weary after a long journey, and on demanding something to eat, have been coolly informed that breakfast or dinner, as the case might be, was just over; but at such or such an hour I should hear the gong for dinner or supper. But if, as has been sometimes the case, I arrived after supper, I well knew that it was a hopeless matter. I might, perhaps, obtain a crust of bread and a mouthful of hard cheese, if the landlord or landlady were in good humour; but no regular meal was procurable until the next morning.

And here let me observe that in the country parts of the United States the term "tea," as applied to a meal, is unknown, and is little used, even in the cities. The last meal of the day partaken of is usually at from five to six or seven o'clock in the evening (at a later hour frequently in hotels and in the houses of the wealthier classes) is styled "supper." But the Americans, as a rule, wisely abjure the heavy meal which we style supper in England.

And now for a few remarks relative to the different classes of boarding-houses in American cities, the average charges for board and lodging, and the manner in which the boarders live in these houses. I will begin with the lower classes, commonly called "mechanics' boarding-houses," of New York city. In these houses, previous to the war, which raised prices and wages also to a fictitious value, the ordinary charge for board and lodging was from three to four dollars (twelve to sixteen shillings English) a week. For this sum three meals a day, viz., breakfast, dinner, and supper were provided, together with a bed, sometimes singly, sometimes doubly tenanted, in a double, or treble-bedded room.

As the name given to these houses implies, their inmates usually consist of mechanics and journeymen, and the lower classes of shopmen, or "clerks" as all shopmen are termed in America, most of whom are obliged to rise at an early hour to go to their respective occupations. The breakfast hour is usually seven a.m., and the meal consists of very weak coffee, strongly flavoured with chicory, and sweetened with molasses, thick slices of bread thinly scraped with butter—the latter usually strong, if not sweet-hot

that egg-cups are rarely, if ever, used in America. Eggs, when served at table, are eaten from wine-glasses or tumblers, the white and the yolk being stirred together with a spoon, and mixed with pepper, salt, and butter, according to taste.

To return to the boarding-house breakfast. Bread is served *ad libitum*, but the butter is scraped on, and the coffee milked and sweetened, and the steak served out in small wedges, by the landlady, before the gong is sounded that summons the boarders to table. During the progress of the meal, the landlady sits at the head of the table, not to partake herself of the breakfast fare, but to watch her boarders while they are eating, and to be ready to supply anyone who requires it with a second wedge of the tough beefsteak ; while, at the same time, she keeps a sharp eye upon the Irish or German "help" who hands round the coffee. As soon as the meal is ended, the boarders hurry away to their various occupations, the table is cleared and immediately laid for dinner, while any unlucky boarder who has overslept himself, or has not come down from his room in time for breakfast, has to go hungry to his work, and to wait until dinner-time ere he can satisfy the cravings of his appetite.

The dinner-hour is usually half-past twelve ; and shortly after twelve o'clock the boarders begin to congregate about the door, or on the doorsteps, or in the passage of the boarding-house, waiting impatiently for the sound of the gong, at the first stroke of which they rush, pell-mell, into the eating-room, and take their seats at the table, where each individual finds his plate already supplied with a certain portion of beef or pork—salt or fresh—(mutton rarely), or whatever happens to be the order of the day, and with a portion of each description of vegetables—potatoes, pumpkins, beans, &c., according to the season. By the side of each plate is a small piece of bread, and on the left hand of each boarder a second or smaller plate, containing a small triangular wedge of pie—pumpkin pie more frequently than anything else.

The landlady, as at breakfast, sits at the head of the table, ready to supply any one who asks for it with a fresh portion of meat and vegetables, though such requests are seldom made, and, to judge from the landlady's looks on such occasions, are certainly not relished ; but no boarder ever presumes on any account to ask to have his plate replenished with pie or tart. At the proper seasons fish is occasionally provided, instead of meat ; and when fruit is in season, in place of the small, triangular wedge of pie, the dessert plates contain a couple of apples, or pears, or a slice of melon, or two or three small peaches, the cheapest fruit, when the season has been good, that can be purchased in America.

Dinner over, the boarders hurry off, pell-mell, as they have

entered the room, to smoke their pipes on the door-steps or in the sitting-room, till it is time to return to their work, and the table is again cleared and arranged for supper. Supper, at six o'clock, resembles the breakfast, minus the beef-steak, and with tea instead of coffee. If any cold meat has been left at dinner, it is cut up into small pieces and distributed in platefuls about the table, each boarder being permitted to help himself to it freely; and in summer, on Sundays, and perhaps once during the week, besides, a very small saucer of strawberries, or in the autumn, blueberries, is placed, as a treat, before each individual at the table. Supper ended, those who do not care to go out for a walk, adjourn to the sitting-room, a long, uncarpetted room, warmed in winter by a huge cast-iron stove in the centre of the floor, around which the boarders seat themselves and read, or smoke, or chat, until bed time, which is understood to be at ten o'clock. At all events, at this hour the gas is suddenly extinguished, without warning, with the exception of one small jet, which is left burning in order that the inmates may see to scramble out of the room. If any of the boarders are dilatory in this movement, the landlady makes her appearance and bids them "scatter," in a peremptory tone of voice, to which none ever presume to reply. The sitting-room door is locked for the night, and on a table in the passage, or "hall," stands a number of camphine lamps, each containing sufficient burning fluid to burn for five minutes—no longer. Those who do not choose to retire so early may, if they please, go for a stroll, each boarder being usually supplied with a latch-key, that he may let himself in without disturbing any other person's rest, at any hour of the night; but the majority of the inmates take each a lamp, and go quietly to bed. If any additional light be required, the person requiring it must provide it at his own expense.

Saturday is pay-day. On Saturday evening at supper-time, each boarder finds his weekly bill placed beside his plate. The landlady, as supper draws near its close, moves from her seat at the head of the table, to a seat at a small table placed near the door, at which her daughter, if she have a grown-up daughter, if not, some female friend or assistant is already seated, pen in hand, and with a long ledger open before her. As each boarder passes out of the room he is expected to pay the amount of his bill to the

I have been thus prolix in my description of the rules and regulations of a mechanics' boarding-house, because, although, the course, the treatment of the boarders and the style in which the table is supplied and the accommodation that is afforded, vary considerably, according to the class of boarding-house and the wealth and social position of the inmates, all are conducted according to a somewhat similar barrack-like system. The domestic privacy and the home-like sociability which may be sometimes found, at least to some extent, in well-conducted English boarding-houses are almost wholly lacking in those of America.

In an American hotel this domestic privacy, and the quiet home-life are neither expected nor looked for; while, as regards convenience, and most other requirements, combined with comparative economy, the American hotels are almost perfect: hence, their general superiority to the hotels of this country. But a boarding-house is, in some sort, a poor one, I grant; still, in some sort, a substitute for home: and homelike comforts and domestic privacy are sought for. And those boarding-houses in which they are found to exist—as far as compatible with the unavoidable inn-like characteristics of a dwelling in which several families or individuals reside, who are unconnected in any way with each other—are usually the best patronised: hence, again, the general inferiority of the American boarding-houses to those of England.

The next superior class of boarding-house in America are those occupied by clerks of a better class, and by young men connected with business offices. In these, the charges for board and lodging vary from five or six, to ten dollars; or from one to two pounds a week. They are usually situated in one of the suburbs of the city, and invariably present an aspect of *severe* respectability, that at once betrays their character to the passer-by. In these houses young men frequently voluntarily "room" together, for the sake of economy; otherwise, each boarder has a separate bedroom. There is a common drawing-room, with highly varnished and showy furniture, and everything about the place has an almost painful appearance of newness, which seems to forbid comfort and sociability. A grand piano invariably occupies a place at one end of the room, and lounges and whatnots of the most fragile construction are scattered about, or ranged against the walls; while the latter are invariably adorned with highly-coloured portraits of the mistress of the house, her deceased husband (for she is sure to be a widow), and a group of children, in most unchildlike attitudes. Generally speaking, there are a few single young ladies among the boarder (young girls employed in large millinery "stores," or as daily governesses), who pay somewhat less for their board and lodging than the young men, probably because their presence serves

er attract male boarders to the house, and the inmates, male and female, landlady included, are accustomed to assemble in the dining-room of an evening, and to form card, music, or dancing parties; or gather in groups and coteries, and pass the time in, generally speaking, trivial and vapid conversation.

In this class of boarding-house, the table is usually tolerably well supplied with plain food, though there are too many attempts at display in made-dishes, in place of substantial joints. The gentlemen of the house seldom dine at home, except on Sundays; but the inevitable and invariable beef-steak appears on the supper table, frequently accompanied by pastry, and fruit, when it is in season, and on Sundays an abundant and excellent dinner is provided.

In this there is nothing to complain of; but the same rigid regulations exist as to the meal hours, that exist in the lower class of boarding-house heretofore described, and no infringement of these regulations is permitted. There is no lingering over breakfast with those whose occupations do not call them away at an early hour, or who, having been out on business or pleasure, late into the night, are disinclined to obey the summons of the omnipresent gong, at half-past seven or eight o'clock in the morning. The table is invariable cleared immediately after each meal, and re-arranged for that which is to follow. At nine o'clock in the forenoon, any one entering the dining-room would find the table already laid for dinner, minus the viands, and at eight p.m., he would find everything arranged for breakfast the next morning. The servants wish to get through their work as speedily as possible, that they may set about their own business or pleasure, and will brook no interference with their self-arranged duties.

Family boarding-houses in the United States are, of course, of several different classes, though in nearly all the charges for board and lodging are high, families of the poorer classes usually occupying rooms in tenement houses. I have known a gentleman, with his wife and child, to pay forty dollars, or eight pounds a week, for board and lodging, and two furnished rooms, in a moderately-sized boarding-house on Brooklyn Height. though the

A single man, who merely requires a small bedroom to himself, may reside at a New York or Boston hotel, and enjoy every accommodation, and sit down to a table as extravagantly supplied with delicacies of every variety as if he were in the mansion of another Lucullus, at a cost of two dollars and a half a day ; but the charge for private furnished sitting-rooms in the hotels is exorbitant to a degree.

In family boarding-houses in the United States—though there must be, of course, where persons occupy their own suites of rooms, more latitude allowed than in boarding-houses for single persons—the same rigid regulations apply to meals partaken of at the common table in the dining-room ; there is the same rushing to the table at the sound of the gong, and the same barrack-like practice of clearing the table, and “ fixing ” things up, the very moment that the servants, who eat at the same table after the boarders have quitted it, have satisfied their appetites ; and there is the same absence of anything like home life. The servants regard the boarders as strangers, and almost as enemies, for whom they are in duty bound to do as little as possible. The boarders themselves rarely meet except at the dinner table, for families who reside in boarding-houses are singularly unsociable ; and the constant change of faces—for the Americans are partial to change, and seldom remain long in one boarding-house—causes strangers, unaccustomed to American habits, to feel as if, after all, they are living at an inn.

In the very highest class of family boarding-houses, however, the table is often as abundantly and as well supplied as that of a first-class hotel ; and though American cookery is more after the French system than the English, and plain joints of beef or mutton are seldom seen on an American table, the viands are not to be despised, even by a plain, hearty Englishman ; while, in the matter of vegetables, America surpasses England or any part of Europe. The potatoes of America may not be quite so good as ours ; nor, perhaps, the greens and cabbages ; but then, at every well-appointed table will be found a profusion of vegetables to many of

her fingers, and stripping off the heads of corn with the teeth—a not very graceful performance, though the corn, when young and tender, is very excellent. Then there are parsnips, and beet-roots, sliced and boiled; and tomatoes, either eaten raw, sliced in vinegar, or cooked in various ways; and a host of other vegetables, that it would fill pages to name, besides hominy, or Indian corn which has been steeped in lye, and thus deprived of its outer cuticle, when it becomes, white and soft as boiled rice, but much finer and sweeter in flavour.

In pies the Americans excel; in puddings they fail; and the American plum pudding, which is sometimes attempted at Christmas, is a wretchedly miserable counterfeit of the English original.

The dessert, however, is always good; most of the British fruits are found in perfection in America, with the exception of the gooseberry, which is decidedly inferior to ours; while the Americans boast of many others which we regard as the produce of hot-houses, or of a tropical, or at least a Southern clime, such as peaches, bananas, avocada, commonly called alligator pears, the inside rind of which is eaten with vinegar and pepper, and which contains an immense black stone as large as an ordinary sized ball; also oranges, not long plucked from the tree, with the skin still green, and shaddocks, and green limes, and nuts of almost every variety; though it must be confessed that of these the last-named fruits, with the exception of the peach, which grows to perfection in the State of Jersey, all come from the Southern States to New York.

Of wines I shall say nothing, since, whether in hotels or boarding-houses, the guests, or boarders, provide wines or beer for themselves. No liquid but water is supplied at dinner by host or landlady; but the water is excellent, and is *always iced*, whether in an hotel, or a first or fifth class boarding-house.

I should also observe, while speaking of family boarding-houses, that there is always a large, elegantly furnished reception and drawing-room, common to all the boarders; but the drawing-room is usually left to the younger inmates of both sexes, who occasionally meet in it of an evening, the older folk usually preferring to keep to their own rooms, unless on those occasions—considered *de rigueur*—when the landlady, and the inmates, each family in their turn give a party, and invite, not only all the families in the house, but likewise such of their friends as each family chooses.

In Boston, and other large New England cities, family boarding-houses are less numerous, and are not patronised by the same classes as those of New York. Boston itself is the most truly aristocratic city in America; the upper classes of the city are generally descended from old families of note, and they maintain an exclusiveness rarely found elsewhere in America, and usually reside in their own private mansions. Such family boarding-houses as do exist, however, and all other descriptions of boarding-houses, are conducted in a similar manner to those of New York, only in Boston and throughout New England, the restrictive rules are more rigidly and more disagreeably maintained. New England cookery is *en generis*, and is, naturally enough, highly extolled by New Englanders wherever they are found—and they are found everywhere throughout the Union; for as Stephen Douglas, himself a New Englander once said, when addressing a body of his countrymen:—

“New England, fellow citizens, is a great country—a noble country. Its citizens have made themselves a name everywhere for energy and perseverance, and New England has produced more distinguished statesmen, and men of genius, than any other section of the United States. Yes, fellow citizens, New England is a great country—a *good* country. I don't know where I could find, were I to traverse the Union, a *better* country than New England—to *emigrate from*.”

Few others besides New Englanders, however, are enamoured of New England cookery, which is chiefly remarkable for the famous dish of “pork and beans,” and for the quantity of molasses and grease with which the viands are saturated. It is, however, the land of “pumpkin pies,” and “apple sass,” and although I cannot say that I am partial to either delicacy, pumpkin pies are especially esteemed, not only by Americans throughout the Union, but also by most travellers who have visited America; so I presume that the fault lies in my own palate, and as the New Englanders, though a sharp, shrewd, “smart” people to deal with, are proverbial for their hospitality on special occasions, and will freely bestow on such occasions, either upon their guest, or the stranger within their gates, the best that their houses can afford, it would be ungrateful to decry the products of their *cuisines*.

The boarding-houses in the Western States do not differ greatly from those of New York, except in the nature of the viands that are set before the boarders. Venison and bears' meat appear more frequently upon the western tables, and are neither of them to be despised; but as the traveller progresses westward he cannot fail to remark a visible deterioration in what is termed, in the Eastern and Atlantic States, refinement of manner, among the boarders, until he reaches the far-west, when he may think himself fortunate

if he find a boarding-house in which he can purchase at any cost the luxury of a private sleeping-room, and if he prefer, on a warm day, to sit down to table in his shirt-sleeves, no one will make any objection. In fact, in some parts of the extreme far-west, to appear in one's shirt-sleeves is to appear in full dress, since the custom affords an opportunity to the wearer of a clean shirt, to show that it is *really clean*.

Southern boarding-houses, unless in the large cities, such as New Orleans, are never entered by persons of respectability, who, if they intend to remain in the south, must provide themselves with domiciles of their own. Otherwise travellers of respectability find hospitality in its heartiest form at the houses of the planters; the hotels being placed in the same category as the boarding-houses. In New Orleans, however, and in other large cities of the south, the hotels and boarding-houses vie with, and sometimes excel, in comfort those of the north.

There are other American boarding-houses to which I can but briefly allude, and which I cannot describe, though, I presume, similar houses may be found everywhere; I allude to the lowest class of the boarding-houses of New York, such as those frequented by the poorest class of Irish labourers, and the negro boarding-houses in the back-slums of the city; the latter hot beds of filth and of the vilest degradation. There are also German, French, and other foreign boarding-houses of which I know but little, but which are conducted in a manner to suit the habits of their respective patrons.

Boarding-houses are, in fact, what the Americans term an "institution" of the country, and boarding-house life is reduced to system. In England the *habitudes* of boarding-houses are usually either single men and women away from their homes, or old bachelors and spinsters, who have few friends who care for them or they care for. It is comparatively rare to find married people with families voluntarily establishing themselves in boarding-houses, as in the United States.

Perhaps, however, the greatest drawback to boarding-house life in America, independent of the lack of domestic privacy, and the inability to eat and drink when one pleases, and to do what one likes, as a man may do in his own home, if he do not transgress the laws of morality and decency, is the *nonchalance*, and even impudence, of the servants or "helps" as they choose to style themselves. These damsels, frequently but a few months out from Ireland or Germany (for an American servant is rarely to be found in the cities), where they have been used to labour hard for small wages and the poorest food, or to go barefooted and to live in mud hovels, and clothe themselves in the poorest garments or in rags, assume an importance, and dress in a fashion, that would be

ludicrous were it not disgusting. They pride themselves upon their impudence, which they look upon as independence, and seem to take a positive pleasure in making those whom they are paid to serve as uncomfortable as it lies in their power to make them.

The comfort of every house depends a good deal upon the servants ; but American mistresses, and especially boarding-house mistresses, have little or no control over their female servants, and are afraid that if they deal harshly with them they will leave them at a nonplus, and perhaps give them a bad character into the bargain.

J. A. M.

A RIDE IN QUEENSLAND

I HAD been about a fortnight in Brisbane; had seen all that was to be seen in that rising, but still embryo city; had dined with the Governor, assisted at a masonic banquet, attended a fancy ball—no trifle, by the way, in tropical Australia;—made small excursions into the neighbouring country; imbibed sundry sherry cobbles at “Mason’s,” the leading hotel; had visited the Supreme Court during a trial, and heard some decidedly hard-swearing there; sat in the stranger’s gallery of the Legislative Assembly, and been duly edified by its display of senatorial wisdom; had, in fact, done all that was to be done, and was beginning to find my enforced idleness irksome, and my time hang heavily on my hands. Queen Street, the Regent Street of Brisbane, had no further charms for me. I knew its dusty length by heart; its haphazard *melange* of brick and boarding, of plate-glass and canvas; the wild independence of its architecture, and the heterogenous collection of articles exposed for sale in its shop windows, had no more novelty for me. I was sick of such sight-seeing, weary of having nothing to do, and impatiently waiting the transaction of some business which would render necessary a journey “Up the Country,” to view a sheep station in which I was about to take a share.

In this mood I strolled out one morning into the botanical gardens with my after-breakfast cigar. These gardens occupy a pleasant site on the banks of the river, are laid out with some taste, and offer a convincing proof to the new-comer of the great adaptabilities of the country to the requirements of plants and trees of various climes. The growths of many lands may here be seen side by side: the plum, the pear, the peach, the grape, the Guava, the custard apple (heavenly fruit!) the orange, the pomegranate, the banana, the pineapple, the tea, the coffee, the cacao plant, cotton, sugar-cane, arrowroot, and tobacco, flourish in no unfriendly rivalry, and indicate what may, and doubtless one day will, be done in this country when time, labour and capital have developed its resources.

After wandering some little time through this Australian paradise, getting up a sort of flirting acquaintance with two of his Excellency’s pet kangaroos, and watching lazily a little steamer puffing her noisy way up the river to Ipswich (what a quaint, yet touching habit, we English have of naming our new homes after the old ones far away!) the Queensland sun began to come out pretty strongly, and I sought shelter from his rays in a magnificent grove of bamboos which occupies the centre of the gardens, here lighting

a fresh cigar to keep off the mosquitoes, and listening to the drowsy hum of insect life, the musical groaning of the bamboos as they bent before the breeze, and the sounds of distant labour from the town, I was enjoying the *dolce far niente* to my heart's content, when quick footsteps rapidly approaching roused me from a sort of semi-reverie. I looked up, and saw my friend M——, the Colonial Treasurer.

M——, a cabinet minister, and member of the Colonial Parliament, was a representative man in more senses than one: A type of many Australian colonists, twenty years ago he had landed at Sydney, a raw youth with his fortune to make. Now, a man of property and standing, leasing land equal in extent to a third of an English county, numbering his flocks and herds by thousands, possessing a capital country house within a few miles of Brisbane, the husband of a charming wife, and father of a promising family. Still young, he could well look back on his past life with pride, and forward with hope, but alas,—

“The best laid schemes of mice and men,
Gang aft agley.”

Within a few months of our merry greeting in these gardens, the Angel of Death smote poor M——, almost in his wife's arms, and bore him from his earthly treasure, to that undiscovered country we must all one day visit.

But on this occasion there was no shadow of what was to come; my friend drew near with a bright eye and a springy step—“What are you doing, and what do you intend to do?”

“Nothing,” I replied—“for I *have* nothing to do. I am waiting for a letter, and on receiving it, shall probably start up the country.”

“Why wait for this letter? come with me, and see something of the bush. Parliament is up—the council has just had its last sitting for the season. I make the round of my stations in a day or two. Come up to Riverstown to-morrow. Sleep at my house, and we will start the next day. Bring your wife with you, and leave her to mourn with mine till we return.”

The offer chimed in with my humour; I packed up my “swag,” *anglice*, valise, that evening, and next morning, shipping wife and horse on board the Ipswich steamer, left Brisbane for my friend's house.

slopes and gardens, gay with brightest flowers, and the vivid green of the graceful banana decked either shore; to these succeeded the cottages and clearings of the settlers, and many were our stoppages as their boats came alongside with passengers or cargo; but these soon became scarcer and more scarce, till at last the primeval forest cast its shadows over the narrowing stream, and the lonely cabin of some colonising pioneer broke, but at distant intervals, the silence and the solitude.

About half way on our journey, we halted to coal. Here the mineral crops out from both banks, the seam being cut by the river. The miners tunnel inwards from the water, and both coaling and mining is cheap and easy. Our stock of fuel replenished, we push on, and soon pass a "boiling down" establishment, at this time not at work, but small mountains of whitened bones and an odour perhaps best undescribed, testified most emphatically to the hecatombs of beef and mutton which had there been converted into tallow. From here to our destination was not far. The whistle blew a shrill scream of warning, we steamed up a long reach, rounded a bend, and my friend's place was before us. We pulled up beside a rough pier, where he and his family awaited us, and landed to a hearty welcome.

"Settling in Queensland must be an extremely pleasant and profitable speculation," was my thought as we passed from the river bank up the park-like slope that lay before M——'s house, and my eye took in the many forms of substantial comfort which he had gathered around him.

The building stood in grounds of some three hundred acres, from which the thick undergrowth, or "scrub," had been almost entirely cleared away, only leaving here and there an occasional thicket; the heavy timber was also in course of being greatly thinned out, but sufficient trees were left to give beauty to the landscape and the necessary shade. On the left, as we proceeded to the house, was a large garden well stocked with fruit, flowers, and vegetables; to the right was a cotton-field of considerable proportions, but this had been planted, as I afterwards discovered, more in deference to the "cotton cry" than from any real design of practised cultivation of the plant. M—— was a squatter, *pure et simple*, one of the numerous class who believe in nothing but wool as a paying industrial product in Australia. And so the poor cotton plants were left to flourish at their own sweet will, to bear witness, by the rank luxuriousness of their growth, to the fitness of the soil and climate for them, while their snowy pods burst unheeded and ungathered; and the fitful breezes blew the feathered seeds to fall and germinate as fate might please. In the rear of the house were the farmyard and buildings, populous and noisy

with poultry, turkeys, geese, and pigs; beyond this again, a paddock, in which a few sleek cattle, horses, and sheep were grazing, or clustering in the shade.

M——, not content with being the architect of his own fortune, had designed his house, and decidedly had been more successful than many amateur builders. The edifice proper occupied three sides of a hollow square. Entering under the broad verandah which girded it, we passed through a passage, with a spacious drawing-room and dining-room on either side, into a large and lofty hall lighted from above, into which opened the various other apartments of the ground floor; a broad staircase, or rather ladder, of polished wood led to the upper story and the bed-rooms, entrance to which was given by a railed gallery extending all round the house. The hall, pannelled in dark cedar, was a delightful feature of the building, and from the height of the roof, and the numerous doors that surrounded it, cool even in the hottest day. It was the common room of the family. Here also were held the balls, parties, and private theatricals, in which M—— delighted. Here, too, was the justice room upon occasion; and here the master of the household, mindful of the Giver of his good things, collected his family and retainers for weekly prayer. Leaving the hall by another door, we entered a large yard with a splendid young Moreton Bay pine in the centre, beyond it a row of stables and offices formed the rear face of the square, and completed the plan of an admirable dwelling.

After wandering about, and admiring the grounds, the garden, the pigs, the sheep, the poultry, the cattle, and the horses, with which last my own steed had now scraped acquaintance, we returned to the house, and dinner over wiled away the time with music, singing, and the like, till the hour of retiring, which, after the ladies had left us, we delayed a little over a chatty pipe and glass, but still parted betimes to regain strength for our next day's ride.

The dawn had broken brightly next day, when I awoke. I arose, and drawing the curtains of my window, looked out. The morning was fresh, and almost cold; the dew-drops glistened on the lawn; a thick fog shrouded the river, which, however, the rays of the sun were rapidly dispersing. The "laughing jackass" was making the woods echo with his quaint note, the cockatoos were

nether man ; and about noon, after parting from our respective Ariadnes, started on our first day's stage. The party consisted of M——, his brother, who was also his superintendent, and the present writer.

About two miles from Riverstown our route took us through Ipswich, a neat and thriving town ; its former name was "Limestone," given it by the convicts in the penal times, and carrying out the promise of its original appellation. The houses are mostly built of that material, offering a striking contrast to the wooden shanties, almost universally met with. We were soon beyond the town, proceeding along a broad but rough "corduroy" road, formed of trees laid transversely side by side and gravelled. The traffic from the up-country settlements and stations is great ; the soil through which the road passes for the most part is of a tenacious clay, that when flooded—which it is very often—is heavy to a degree, so that without this rough and ready causeway, carts and waggons would be bogged beyond redemption. Evidences of the disastrous floods, to which the colony is too frequently subject, were on every hand in the shape of collections of straw and drift-wood, lodged in the forks of trees some twelve or fifteen feet above the ground, with now and then the carcase of some luckless sheep, rotting and bleaching to a skeleton, in their midst. The railway, however, which these go-a-head denizens of a colony not ten years old, were already hard at work on, was soon to give a practicable road at all seasons, when the "corduroy" arrangement would sink into oblivion, and great were the speculations of the colonial secretary and his brother as to the influence of this work on the fortunes of their adopted country.

Our first incident of travel was an encounter with a hapless "new chum" who was in great grief ; he had evidently just arrived in the colony, and was resplendent in an emigrant's kit imported direct from Piccadilly. His gaiters were a brilliant yellow, his knickerbockers and Norfolk shirt still showed the creases of their folds, and his pith helmet was fresh from the shop in the opera colonnade. He had a led horse, which bore a pair of saddle-bags, a waterproof bed, and an elaborate canteen that glistened in the newness of its tinnery. In this guise the plucky and independent Briton was on his way to his friends, with the vaguest idea as to where to find them, but having dismounted to drink at a stream which crossed the track, his packhorse had broken away, and would not suffer himself to be caught, while the beast he bestrode showed an equal disinclination to be mounted ; each time the foot neared the stirrup, the brute would edge off to the right ; and as the horse was tall and his owner short, the struggle was sufficiently ludicrous ; we played the part of the good Samaritan so far as to help him to

the back of his steed, when he started after his saddle-bags, which were now rapidly disappearing in the direction we had left.

The Colonial Treasurer, soon after this little episode, cantered off to inspect the railway works, and we followed his lead. We found the embankments progressing satisfactorily, and after following their course for some little time, pulled up at a small wayside inn to bait our horses and to lunch. The proprietor of this hostelry and his family were in a state of some excitement. It appeared that the evening before, a party of navvies had visited him on a drinking bout; these gentry, having succeeded in getting excessively drunk, left for their camp, but when half way there, feeling an accession of thirst, decided to quench it in more brandy. On returning to the inn they found its doors closed, their host in bed and disinclined to open them; whereupon they incontinently broke in doors and windows, helped themselves, and finally retired without paying either for the damage or their drink. The language of the despoiled landlord was more expressive than elegant, but he was in some measure appeased by an assurance from the minister, that a body of police should be immediately distributed along the line, who, if unable to enforce payment for what had been done, would prevent like depredations for the future.

The day was on the wane when we left this for our night's resting-place, and we pushed on briskly. The hills of the "Little Liverpool" range lay before us, and we reached their summit as the day was declining; from thence the eye ranged over a vast expanse of sombre foliage, to where the great dividing range loomed in the dim distance. Beneath us was the smiling valley, and the hamlet where we were to pass the night. A stream like a silver thread, wound along the plain, which was dotted with sheep and cattle. Presently the sun fell behind the sea of dusky green, the night grew rapidly dark, the stars came out in all their southern brilliance, and the lights of Laidley shone a bright welcome as we rode up to the inn, and dismounted at its door. Here were other wayfarers, and our party at dinner was almost large. "Sublime tobacco," and a glass or two of brandy and water, crowned the repast, and after some talk on sheep, cattle, horses, the markets, and such like colonial topics, each man sought his bed.

Next morning we were early in the saddle, with a long day's ride before us. The swampy grounds of the lower country had

a shadowy ravine where the tree fern and the "bottle" tree grew in great abundance. The monotony of lonely travel would now and then be broken by a train of bullock drays, laden with wool from some up-country station, here plodding their weary way along, there halting in some picturesque encampment: these trains are commonly four or five months on the road. Or we would overtake a party of emigrants bound for the interior, with ruddy faces still unbrowned by the Australian sun: their wives and children occupying the solitary cart, pushed high up on a heap of pots and pans and blankets, and gazing with wide-mouthed wonder at all the novelties of their new home; or a couple of stock drivers, brown and thin, in search of stray cattle, would greet us as they passed; their stock-whips, long as a lasso, which, when cracked, sounded like rifle shots through the woods.

Sometimes we left the ordinary road for the telegraph track, a broad path some eighty feet wide, which cuts its way, straight as an arrow or a Roman road, through every obstacle, and, therefore, not always practicable for travellers.

Our noonday halt was at a place rejoicing in the name of "Bigg's Camp;" so called from having been the rendezvous of one of the earlier squatters and explorers before driving his herds over the Liverpool Range, at whose feet it lies. Here there were now a snug homestead and country inn, green, grassy meadows, and a limpid brook; altogether, one of the prettiest places I had yet seen in the country. Here, too, I discovered that my new English saddle had galled my horse's back. A word of caution to any intending emigrant who may chance to read these pages:—Take nothing in the shape of saddlery; let no artificer in pigskin, however crafty, tempt you; you will find his wares a mockery, a delusion, and a snare; in short, all equipments may be dispensed with, and may be got better and cheaper in the country. The only articles with which a man need provide himself are boots, large roomy boots; all else is mere vanity and vexation of spirit. I speak from experience, *experto crede*.

Having doctored up my saddle and my horse's back as well as possible, we commenced the ascent of the Liverpool Range, by a road which is certainly as steep as man or beast could desire. While passing up the lower part of the slope, my unsophisticated eye was struck by the sight of numberless trunks of trees, that lay on each side of the road. It looked as if some terrible tempest had

fast, and tumbling over the cliffs; at the foot of the hill the men cast off this primitive contrivance, which they are compelled to remove to a certain distance from the road, and the accumulations of years have formed an enormous *abattis*, whose proportions are always increasing.

Gradually, and with painful effort, we ascended, the eye sweeping over ravines and valleys, and the wooded landscape, the view changing with every turn, till at last, after many a halt, we scaled the height, and stood on the table-land. Here, two thousand feet above the sea, we breathed a fresher and a cooler air, and our jaded horses stepped out with a brisker pace. A ride of three or four miles through an open forest, and beneath finer trees than we had yet seen, and we emerged on *the* grazing ground *par excellence* of the colony, if not of Australia, the Darling Downs.

Noble plains, stretching as far and farther than the eye can reach, covered knee high with luxuriant grass and herbage, gay with bright patches of red or yellow flowers and the scarlet vetch, while here and there, in shady clumps, the weeping myall with its laburnum-like blossom, the feathery acacia, and the brikalow with its leaves of silvery green, break the monotony of the vast expanse, and gives a park-like character to the scene.

These magnificent pastures are the squatter's *beau idéal*; here many a man, from the rising ground on which his station stands, can see a hundred thousand sheep feeding around him, all his own. The lucky explorers and bold hearts who first sat down with their herds on these then untrodden lands, are now the magnates of Australia; from this verdant and abounding carpeting sprung the marble palaces of Sydney, where Dr. Dunmore Lang's quondam "breechless highlander," and many others of equally humble origin, now live at home at ease.

Do not, gentle reader, imagine from this that it is easy to go and do likewise. No: those chances are past. A station on the Darling Downs is not to be had now except at a price whose amount alone would place the man able to give it far above the necessity of labour.

But our journey was now near over. Our way lay across these

“THE TRUTH, THE WHOLE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH”

THE words of our title are the burden of the many oaths which are daily taken in English courts of justice, by all classes of the community. So common is this event, that probably very few persons ever think that oaths have their history, or are any thing more than mere dry forms appurtenant to the machinery of the law. We shall, therefore, in a short article, endeavour to show that the ceremony of oath taking, which is so often performed mechanically, and with almost profane nonchalance, is worthy of half-an-hour's consideration.

The laws of all civilized countries require the security of an oath for evidence given in a court of law, and on other occasions of high importance; and all persons who believe in a God, as an avenger of falsehood, are admitted to give evidence. An oath (*Goth, aith; Sax, aith or eoth*) is a solemn calling on, or appealing to God or the Almighty Creator, according to the faith of the party, as a witness of the truth of that which the oath taker affirms or denies in the presence of one or more persons, who are duly authorised to administer it.

Oaths were common in ancient nations from the earliest times. The Bible contains numerous instances of oath taking amongst the Jews, and of the punishment of perjury, which crime it strongly condemns. One of the first records of an appeal made to God, upon the taking of a vow, is that in Genesis, xiv., 20, where Abraham says to the King of Sodom, “I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord,” that he would not take anything which belonged to the king. This form of lifting up the hand when taking an oath is frequently mentioned in Scripture. Thus, in Ezekiel, xx., 5, 6, we are told that God lifted up his hand that he would bring the Israelites out of bondage into the promised land. Again, in Daniel, xii., 7, a man “held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever.” And in the Revelations, x., 6, an angel is said to have lifted up his hand to Heaven, and sworn by the Almighty.

Another form of oath-taking amongst the Jews, was for the swearer to place his hand under the thigh of the person to whom the promise was made. So, in Genesis, xxiv., 2, 3, Abraham said to his servant, “Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and I will make thee swear by the Lord.” And in the same book, xlvii., 29, we are told that Israel, when upon his death-bed, made his son, Joseph, put his hand under his dying father's thigh, and swear that he would bury him at a certain place.

Another form of oath was that taken before the altar, of which we have examples in 1 Kings, viii, 31, "If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house, then hear thou in heaven;" and in 2 Chronicles, vi., 22, in which almost the same words are used. It was the custom amongst the Hebrews to stand in such a position that they looked towards the Temple, if they were not in Jerusalem when they took an oath.

Another form of adjuration was for the witnesses to lay their hands upon the head of an accused person, of which we find an example in Leviticus, xxiv., 14, wherein a blasphemer is commanded to be taken outside the camp, and those who heard him commit his crime, are directed to lay their hands upon his head.

Most commonly the Jews swore by God; but some times they appealed to heathen deities, their sovereign (as did the Romans to their emperors), the blood of Abel, their heads and hands, Heaven, and the Temple. In Isaiah, lxii., 8, we are told that "The Lord hath sworn by his right hand," a custom which has survived until this day amongst the Irish, who "swear by the hand."

Early Greek writers frequently mention the fact that oaths were taken in their country on solemn and important occasions; and the Greeks punished perjurers severely, and held the opinion that the crime of oath-breaking was requited after death. These people swore by their gods and goddesses (the men generally by the former, the women more often by the latter); and frequently on solemn occasions the oaths were accompanied by sacrifice, when the people lay their hands upon their altars, victims, or other sacred things, as bringing before them, corporeally, as witnesses, the deities whom they adjured. The Romans swore by their gods and goddesses, and also by individuals and things which were most dear to them; and, under the later emperors, they adopted, from the Greeks, the forms of sacrificial oaths.

The ancient Medes and Lydians made an incision in their arms, and tasted each other's blood, when swearing on important occasions. This custom of sealing an oath with blood has survived until comparatively recent times; for Ysbrant Ides, in his "Travels from Moscow to China, in 1705," tells us that a Tunguzian form of oath was to thrust a knife into the body of a live dog, and suck its blood so long as it would flow. This was the greatest and most solemn confirmation of truth amongst the people.

The Christian practice of swearing upon the Gospels was, no doubt, founded upon the Jewish custom of placing the hands upon the book of the law. Haydn says that oaths were taken on the Gospels so early as A.D. 528. This form is mentioned in the laws of the Lombards. The judicial oath was originally taken without

kissing the book, but with the form of laying the right hand upon it. Probably the addition of kissing, which seems to be less a part of the oath than a form of reverence to the book, came into use in the latter part of the sixteenth century.

Concurrently with the custom of swearing on the Gospels, were other forms of oath. For instance, it was often taken upon the wafer or consecrated body of Christ, or by touching the corporale, or cloth, which covered the sacred elements. Hence, as some conjecture, an oath is often called a corporal oath. Richard II. once caused the Earl of Northumberland to swear upon the corporalia, or eucharist. Amongst the nations who overthrew the Roman empire, the most common mode of swearing was on the relics of saints; and, by the laws of the Alamanni, conjurators placed their hands on the coffer containing such valued remains, and then swore. By the same laws, women could swear by their breasts and the tresses of their hair. It was not uncommon at an early period in England and abroad, by one or more churches. The deponent went to the appointed number of churches, and at each one took the ring of the door in his hand, and repeated the words of the oath.

The ancient English soldier swore by his sword. In 1306, Edward I. swore an oath upon two swans. Swearing by these birds was a common usage. Keightley, in his “History of England,” tells us of an early sovereign who, at a large banquet, vowed before God and the swans, which, according to fashion, were placed on the table, to punish certain rebels. Dr. Lingard says that in the fourteenth century the vows of chivalry were not taken on the Gospels, but in the presence of a peacock, pheasant, or other bird of beautiful plumage.

Our sovereigns had each a favourite oath. Thus, William the Conqueror swore by the splendour of God; William Rufus, by St. Luke's face; and John, by God's tooth. Elizabeth's oath was a most impious and irreverent one; and James I. was a great swearer; but, happily, in the twenty-first year of this king's reign, an act was passed for the suppression of non-judicial oaths. From the earliest times until the Reformation, the custom of swearing was so common and terrible in this country, that Englishmen were proverbially known on the Continent for their disgraceful oaths. Chaucer gives us many instances of things by which his countrymen swore. For example, his host strengthens one assertion by St. Paul's bell, and another by his father's soul; Sir Thopas asseverates by ale and bread; Arcite, by his head; Theseus, by mighty Mars the red; the carpenter's wife, by St. Thomas of Kent; and the Cambridge scholar, by his father's kin. Shakespeare makes one of his characters swear by his beard; and Peter,

the apprentice, in "Henry VI.," holds up his hands, and swears "by these ten bones."

In England, the person taking a judicial oath is ordinarily obliged to lay his bare right hand on, and kiss the Gospels, standing up, and with the head uncovered. But although this is the common custom, the law provides that in all cases in which an oath may be lawfully administered, the person taking it is bound by it, provided that the same shall have been administered in such form, and with such ceremonies, as the person may declare to be binding on his conscience. It will thus be seen that the form of the oath under which God is invoked as a witness is to be accommodated to the religious persuasion of the swearer, it being idle to compel a man to swear by a God in whom he does not believe, and whom he therefore does not revere. Consequently, we swear Christians upon the New Testament, with their heads uncovered; and Jews upon the Pentateuch, with their hats on. But a Jew who professes Christianity, although he may not have been baptized, nor even formally renounced the Jewish faith, is allowed to be sworn upon the Gospels. Also a witness who believes both the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, yet as the latter prohibits, and the former countenances swearing, desires to be sworn on the former, will be permitted to be so sworn. So when a witness refuses to be sworn in the usual form, by laying his right hand on the book, and afterwards kissing it, but desires to be sworn by having the book laid open before him, and holding up his right hand, the oath rite may be administered accordingly. And it is reported that on a trial for high treason, when one of the witnesses refused to be sworn in the usual way, but put his hands to his buttons, and, in reply to a question whether he was sworn, stated that he was sworn, and was under oath, it was held to be sufficient.

The Scotch oath is thus administered; holding up his right hand and uncovered, the witness repeats, after an officer of the court, the words of the oath; and he may hold up his hand without touch-

his thumb under the book. The reason for this, probably is, that the Welsh in former times, longer retained the custom of merely placing their hands upon the book, and not raising it to their lips to kiss it. In swearing Roman Catholics it is sometimes considered proper to make them take a cross as well as the Testament in their right hands, and kiss both; the cross is, however, sometimes merely marked on the back of the book; but this formality is unnecessary unless desired by the witness. Quakers and the United Brethren, called Moravians, and Separatists, are allowed to make a solemn declaration or affirmation, instead of taking an oath.

The most solemn Mohammedan oath is made on the open Koran. Mohammed himself used the form, “by the setting of the stars.” The ceremony of a Mohammedan oath in an English court is thus given:—The witness first placed his right hand flat upon the Koran, then put his other hand to his forehead, and brought the top of his forehead down to the book, and touched it with his head. He then looked for some time upon it, and being asked what effect that ceremony was intended to produce, he answered that he was bound by it to speak the truth. The deposition of a Gentoo who touched with his hand the foot of a Brahmin, has been received as valid. The following is given as the form of swearing a Chinese witness. On entering the box he immediately knelt down, and a China saucer having been placed in his hand, he struck it against the brass rail in front of the box and broke it. The crier of the court then by direction of the interpreter administered the oath in these words, which were translated by the interpreter into the Chinese language:—“You shall tell the truth, and the whole truth; the saucer is cracked, and if you do not tell the truth, your soul will be cracked like the saucer.”

Deaf and dumb witnesses, as well as all others who do not speak the English language, are sworn through the medium of another person duly qualified to interpret them, the interpreter being first sworn faithfully to interpret the witness. A peer, who in a Court of Equity is allowed to give in his answer without oath, merely pledging his honour for the truth of it, must be sworn in the usual way if he be examined as a witness.

Bedouin Arabs use various sorts of adjurations, one of which somewhat resembles the oath of the Jews, “by the Temple.” The person sworn takes hold of the middle tent pole, and swears by the life of the tent and its owner.

By the Hindu laws, false evidence is directed to be punished with banishment, accompanied by fine; except in the case of a Brahmin, when it is banishment alone. Witnesses must be examined standing in the middle of the court-room, and the judge must previously address a particular form of exhortation to them,

and warn them in the strongest terms of the enormous guilt of false evidence, and the punishment with which it will be followed in a future state. In India, it is considered that a giver of false evidence for the purpose of saving the life of a man of whatever class, who may have exposed himself to capital punishment, shall not lose a seat in heaven, and, though bound to perform an expiation, has on the whole performed a meritorious action. It is to this sanction which the Hindu law gives to perjury, that has been ascribed the prevalence of false evidence amongst men of all religions in India. Yet the offence of giving false evidence is denounced in the code of laws in terms most awful.

Burmese pregnant women are exempted from taking an oath. The oath of Budhists is an imprecation of evil on the swearer, addressed to the innate powers of nature, if the truth be not spoken ; and it is supposed by these people that even an unconscious departure from truth may cause nature to award punishment, which would in the case of pregnant women thus involve their unborn offspring in the calamity ; hence they are freed from the responsibility of swearing. Amongst Irish women especially, and also amongst English women occasionally, the opinion that it is unlucky for a pregnant woman to take an oath is religiously held. In 1851, such a person refused to be sworn in a London police court ; and in the following year at Chelmsford, a woman gave evidence on this form of vow : " I swear this positively on the condition I am in, being about to become a mother."

There was a time when our forefathers were sworn on the horns at Highgate, a custom which probably arose from the graziers who put up at the gate-house there, on their way to Smithfield, being in the habit, as a means of keeping strangers out of their company, to bring an ox to the door as a test, and those who did not like to be sworn of their fraternity and kiss its horns, were not deemed fit members of their society

E. J. W.

ABOUT TO BE MARRIED

UNDER risk of having this article rejected, I dip my pen in gall. But, before entering into details of what I have undergone in even daring to think of getting married, I must needs relate how such an ambition was stirred in my blood.

A married man I now consider a hero. The possession of a wife is in my eyes a badge of valour—a medal indicative of struggles endured and obstacles overcome. Why the British Government should draft in unmarried men into our regiments, I cannot fancy. The man who has married a wife cannot altogether be a coward; and if marriage was put as a companion test to the requisite standard of inches, we would have a sort of Gideon's army left—the cream of manhood and bravery. Let our commanders-in-chief look to it. He who can say, "I have three maiden aunts to whom I disclosed, without flinching, the possibility of my speedily being married," is one worthy of all military trust: he will be a brave man and a good soldier.

My three maiden aunts, however, had a certain show of excuse for acting as they did. When I first became acquainted with my Mary's father, he was a choleric old captain, retired upon half-pay, and living with his wife and only daughter in a pretty little place at Forest-hill, Surrey. By some means or other I became very intimate with the captain and his family, and often went down from the City on a Saturday afternoon, to stay over the Sunday with them. So far there was nothing to shock the inexpressibly delicate nerves of Miss Caroline, Miss Augusta, and Miss Jemima Potts. But in process of time Mrs. Whitebell died; and from that moment the captain's descent was slow, but fatally sure. He had never been much of a teetotaller; and now, with his wife's supervision removed, he drank deeply. Mary in vain endeavoured to keep him straight. In a word, he drank himself out of money, and out of home; and in the end became the proprietor of some billiard-rooms in the Strand.

Clearly this was no place for my gentle-hearted girl. Though my salary was small enough in all conscience, I deemed it better she should leave her father and enter upon married life, even at the risk of meeting with some inconvenience and annoyance at the outset. I spoke to her upon the subject; put the matter plainly before her; she acquiesced in all I said, and it was resolved we should be married with as little delay as possible.

My aunts Jemima and Augusta then lived in Buckingham Road, Islington; Miss Caroline Potts dwelling by herself in Upper Clapton. The three ladies were joint proprietors of a somewhat

mystical ship called the "Chow Tsun," trading between Shanghai and London; and not unfrequently did these ladies indulge in a little quiet speculation on their own account, by importing from Shanghai a cargo of China and Japan cotton. It was an understood thing amongst them that I was to be heir to this ship; and it was expected of me that I should in all personal matters be under the immediate supervision and control of my three relatives.

Not without trepidation did I approach that intensely solemn and proper-looking house in Buckingham Road. The little maid-servant at once ushered me into the parlour where my two aunts were sitting. I had been in that parlour on many an occasion. I had counted its articles of furniture over and over again, while listening to the meandering harangues of my stately relatives; for obstinately did they persist in considering me quite a boy, though I had petted, and coaxed, and twisted a pale grey moustache into very presentable shape. From the one year's end to the other, there was not a square inch of difference in this apartment. There were the same fire-place ornaments, mostly of foreign manufacture, the same books placed angularly on the same table, the same antiquated glass bottles, containing samples of the first China cotton which the Misses Potts had imported, still arranged, in the same manner, on the same little side-table. And in the hand of my Aunt Augusta, at this moment, was a portion of the same material.

"We are in difficulty, Harry," said my Aunt Augusta.

"Indeed," I replied.

"You see that cotton?"

I signified that I did see the cotton.

"Originally worth nineteen and a half per pound, it is now not worth sixpence a pound."

"Fourpence," suggested my Aunt Jemima, laconically.

"These natives," said Aunt Augusta, with her cold grey face opposite mine, and her cold grey eyes fixed upon me, "these natives are villains."

"Beasts," said Aunt Jemima.

"The cotton having been packed, they must have bored a hole

bell was awaiting me outside to learn the result of my mission, and no time was to be lost.

"Well, Aunt Augusta," I said, with a considerable gulp in my throat, "I'm very sorry about the cotton. You'll get the insurance, however, I suppose——"

"The insurance!" said she, contemptuously, "why——"

"But I just called in for a minute now to—to say—to let you know that there was a—that I—in fact that I intend getting married, Aunt Augusta."

"Boys will be boys, Jemima," she said, with a little smile.

"And so you have come dutifully to ask our consent. Well, you have it!—has he not, Jemima?"

"Certainly, Augusta."

"But stay, who is the favoured one?"

"You mean the young lady—why, an old friend of yours, Mary Whitebell!"

"Mary Whitebell!"

My aunt sank back in her chair, as though she would have fainted; then suddenly sprang up, and lifting up her right hand, said—

"He's ruined, ruined, ruined!—Jemima, he's ruined! Oh, Jemima!"

I was so taken aback by this appalling announcement that I could not reply.

"He says nothing. He acknowledges it. He knows himself to be an evil-doer, a reprobate, an outcast from society! Oh, Jemima, that it should come to this! After all our early training of him, when our sainted Susan departed; after all our watching of him, and fostering of him, that it should come to this!"

"Tell me," I broke in, "why you should——"

"Tell him—tell him! Oh, Jemima, he wants us to tell him! Is he not afraid the earth will open and swallow him up? To pollute our family—our whole family—by bringing into it a worthless, disreputable, low-bred woman!"

"Stay, Augusta, you may wound his feelings," said Miss Jemima Potts.

"You have done so quite sufficiently," I said; "you thought I would always be your message-boy, and go your errands for you, and dress as you wished me, and do nothing naughty for fear of a whipping—(you see I was getting bitter in my indignation)—"I'll be so no more. You may take your old tub of a ship and fill it with bricks and sink it, if you like. You may try to dam the Thames up with your old musty cotton; and you may——"

"Oh, Jemima!"

I had to pause in order to throw a tumbler full of water on my Aunt Augusta's face. As she slowly recovered, I said—

"Violent! violent! Oh, the monster! The unfeeling monster! Take him away, Jemima—take him away! He has ruined our family, he has ruined himself! henceforth he is not one of us—no connection, none! Oh, that I should live to see the day that my sister's son should come to me and say such things. Do you ever think of your sainted mother, sir, in heaven? Are you not afraid to think of her? Oh, you vile monster!"

"Come away," said Aunt Jemima, in a voice of portentous melancholy, "you have estranged yourself from us for ever."

I lifted my hat in the hall, and walked out. In the next street Mary met me with a sweet, inquiring smile.

"Well, my dear, the interview has not altogether—that is, you know, they do not say anything against you—nothing in the world—but——"

"I understand," she said, quickly, with tears coming into her soft blue eyes; "they spoke of my father, and consider I am not worthy to be your wife."

"Well, darling, they have some sort of absurd prejudice, you understand, about——"

Here a hand was laid upon Mary's shoulder, and as we both simultaneously turned, there stood before us my Aunt Augusta, with her grey eyes inflamed with passion.

"You impostor!" she cried, vehemently addressing my little pet, "you vile impostor, thus to seek to gain an entrance into a respectable family! And would you bring your billiards, and your low drunken associates to us? Having entrapped this poor boy, would you seek to rifle us of our honestly earned money? You sent him in, did you, to see what chance of spoil there was? Oh, you minx!"

What could I do? She was a woman. Opportunely a cab was passing at the moment, and I hailed the driver. He brought his vehicle to us, and I told Mary to get in. But my aunt was not yet done with her harangue, and in her excitement she caught Mary by the shoulders. As a last resource I smiled significantly to the cabman, and he, being a person of penetration, at once understood the hint.

"I see," he said, with a surreptitious wink, "a little touched, poor thing!" I nodded. He stepped forward, and deliberately disengaged my aunt's hands from Mary's shoulder.

"Now go home, my pretty little dear," he said to the elderly lady, in a tone of genuine compassion, "and your mamma will give you better bellman."

So far I had not been very successful, but at all events I had accomplished the task of announcing what was to happen.

With my Aunt Caroline I expected to get on more satisfactorily. Miss Caroline Potts was a literary lady. In her youth she had contributed to some cheap periodical, and had never been paid therefore; yet the chief pleasure of her life was to boast of these juvenile literary endeavours, and she generally managed to introduce the subject by a tirade against publishers.

Mary would not, of course, accompany me on this expedition; so I went alone. One day only had elapsed, and I fancied I should have to break the news to Aunt Caroline, as I had done to my other aunts. But Miss Caroline Potts, as I discovered to my horror, had that morning received a visit from her sisters! She welcomed me with an excess of courtesy, and blandly inquired after my health. I replied that I was well.

"You will require all your health, my poor boy," she said.

I ventured to ask the reason.

"Late hours."

I confessed to her that I was as yet in darkness.

"Private tables. A good idea."

I was more bewildered than ever, and sought in vain for an explanation in that cold, grey face, which was even colder and greyer than her sisters.'

"Not very reputable, you know, but still a good idea. Save lots of money, and retire to cultivate respectability. Very late hours, though. Will you apply for a beer-license?"

"Aunt Caroline," I said, "I now see what you mean. I perceive my Aunts Augusta and Jemima have been here, and have poisoned your mind with their foolish prejudices. Now let me tell you——"

"Pray be calm," said Aunt Caroline, with a queenly sweep of her arm; "you are misled, and one cannot expect you to understand clearly. You are bound; and until you're loosed, one can't expect a lucid explanation. Ah!"

Aunt Caroline smiled; and though I recognised the flavour of an old burlesque pun, I was too much annoyed to heed the petty plagiarism.

"I came here simply to tell you of my approaching marriage. As I perceive you already know of it, my duty is done; and I daresay the sooner I go the better."

"You are out of temper through my observations. That is foolish. My sister Augusta is passionate: my sister Jemima bilious; I am reflective. Being reflective, I observed the wisdom of your choice. In opening a private billiard-saloon——"

"Aunt Caroline, if you please, I shall not stay to be insulted. When you wish——"

"Oh! insulted! I should have fancied that when you made up your mind to marry Mary Whitebell, you also resolved never to be insulted. Those people only should place themselves in equivocal positions who are incapable of receiving an insult."

"I see it is useless for me to argue with you, Aunt Caroline. I have placed myself in no equivocal position. In resolving to marry a good and honest girl——"

The look and smile of incredulity upon my aunt's face at this moment were too much for me. Without a word I rose, took my hat, and walked out, still pursued by the phantom of that cold, sceptical smile. I hurried as quickly as I could to Mary's house, and told her that nothing should ever induce me again to enter the house of any one of these, my sole surviving relatives.

That done, I felt happy. What were the occasional twittings of my male companions? the sulkiness of my landlady when I told her I was about to leave?—what were all the petty troubles and annoyances of taking and furnishing a house to me? Nothing! I laughed, and blew them away as feathers in the wind. The grim countenances of these she-griffins no more haunted my dreams. The spectral "Chow-Tsun," riding over me with all its weight of moist cotton, no longer made the night hideous. In place of apprehension by day, and terror while asleep, I had now visions of sunny July afternoons in Surrey: a pretty house, a pretty garden, and, prettiest of all, a pretty wife, who, as I write, is at this moment engaged in manufacturing certain incomprehensible little garments of snow-white cotton and lace.



A LIFE'S MYSTERY

BY CLINTON HOPE.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THREE MONTHS AFTER.

IF absence magnifies the graces of darling Kitty or Matilda, blotting out all remembrance of her defects, its office is full as kindly when grief, not love, is mistress of the heart; indeed, in the first case, if absence is prolonged, it is apt to become traitorous, and, from friend, turn destroyer; whereas the longer a person can be severed from the scene of their unhappiness the more likely the cure. Lillas, roaming in strange lands, surrounded by objects calculated, from their novelty, to awaken the most dormant interest, was a very different being from the stony-looking bride the reader took a farewell of in the last chapter. In early girlhood, when her heart and face were alike free from gloom, she imagined the delight of travelling to surpass every other; and now, despite the haunting demon, memory, she speedily began to recover her lost animation. Nothing was required of her but to be pleased—a task of not insurmountable difficulty, it may be thought, for one blessed with such numberless advantages; so after the first struggle with her fears, she allowed herself to be persuaded that fate could not have intended her to be irretrievably wretched, and that it was her duty to combat regrets which militated against her allegiance to her husband.

Not the honeymoon only, but two moons more had risen and waned, before the Marquis and his wife returned from their continental tour.

My lord's favourite residence was situated not many miles from the Cathedral town of Canterbury, and to the Abbey, hallowed by

associations of his youth, he preferred taking Liliás rather than to the gloomy old castle in Scotland, or the palace-like town residence; but before going home—how strange it sounded to Liliás to say home of any other place than dear Sedgley!—they were to pay a visit at the Hall. For this purpose they hired a yacht, which bore them into the tiny creek that watered the meadows stretching eastward from the mansion.

That Sir Shenton was more than delighted—enraptured—to see his daughter again, looking so well, too, is what was to be expected; and when he perceived how considerate were Lord Welgrave's actions, that all his thoughts seemed for Liliás's happiness, and that she, if not strictly tender in her manner towards him, proved herself grateful for his loving solicitude, and wishful of retaining his esteem,—when, I say, Sir Shenton saw what led him to believe Liliás a very happy wife, his commiseration for Owen Arnold dwindled into comparative nothingness.

If the Marquis of Welgrave had, throughout his life, suffered little, the baronet and his daughter had had lately few glimmerings of pure unalloyed sunshine; but as to all nights comes a morning, to all seasons of trial a beneficent power sends relief; and it would be difficult to select, in this world of gloom, a trio more thoroughly content than the one gathered beneath the Hall roof. The proposed visit of a few days was extended beyond a fortnight, each day bringing, if that were possible, an increase of felicity, and the only cloud that darkened the sum of their joy was at separating. Liliás sadly wanted her father to accompany them, and live with them always; but he reminded her that however gladly her husband might enter into the arrangement in the beginning, such partnerships generally produce unpleasant results.

"To say so, papa, is giving ourselves shockingly bad characters," replied Liliás, with a smile, that tried vainly to be cheerful. "Why should English parents and children-in-law disagree more than those of other countries? I can't bring myself to imagine that the smallest offence could be given or taken by you and—Henry." The name was so unfamiliar to her lips, she hesitated in uttering it, as if it were an unconscionable liberty to call her husband by his Christian name.

"I don't suppose, my love, that we should ever resort to harsh words," said Sir Shenton, laughing—"in truth, I get to regard him

she loved." There was no urging anything after this, and when Lord Welgrave broached the subject, Liliás sat by quietly, and only gave a half-sigh as a kindly refusal was returned.

The Hall left behind, Lady Welgrave turned her attention to the end of the journey, asking a hundred questions of her husband concerning the Abbey, the country, and people about it, which were answered with ready satisfaction, and occupied the time until the walls of the park came in view.

A broad path (a little too straight and well kept, perhaps, for picturesqueness,) hedged by evergreens, and sheltered by stately chestnuts, conducted to the Abbey, a rather modern structure, around which, however, the ivy had thickly twined, imparting to its late-dated architecture a respectable look of antiquity.

"Welcome, dearest! Welcome, darling wife, to your home!" murmured the Marquis, as he led Liliás into the hall, high on the walls of which were hung ancestral portraits, while below them were ranged the living ones of the servants, collected to receive their new mistress.

At their head, radiant with smiles, stood Lady Christabel; her snow-white hair, drawn off her still smooth brow, was covered by lace worthy a fairy's wear, and her grey satin robe was as faultless in fit as the dresses which had adorned her stately figure in its girlish grace. She came forward with outstretched hands to meet the young couple, kissing them upon both cheeks, but with lips silent from emotion. She had been pre-determined to like Liliás from Lord Welgrave's written description; and, though at the wedding she had small opportunity of observing anything of the bride's character, her incomparable loveliness was sufficient to complete the conquest begun by her nephew's eulogiums.

Before commencing the work of inspection, Liliás, being shown to a suite of apartments designed for her use, summoned her maid's attendance.

"I am as tired of travelling, Emma," she said, "as you appear to be, and quite revel in the expectation of a quiet country life."

"Heaven grant, my lady," returned the girl, accustomed by this time to the use of the strange appellation, "that in your adopted home you may have such happiness as will recompense for past suffering!"

"Amen!" answered Liliás, gaily, for she was too much bent upon cultivating cheerfulness to let her thoughts rest upon the theme of old troubles. "But now dress me, and quickly, for I want to look over my newly-acquired possessions. Nor let your taste prove faulty: make me look my best to-day."

Very fastidious was she concerning her toilet, first discarding a

pink dress, because, she said, it made her appear florid, and then a choice brocade, on account of its being a shade too sombre ; but finally she was attired to her satisfaction in a green silk, of the delicate hue of spring's first leaves. In the bosom of her dress she placed a blush rose, the fellow to which relieved the jetty blackness of her hair, and with a complacent smile tripped downstairs to seek her husband. That she did not love him, the reader is aware, why, therefore, it may be asked, did she strive to ensnare his heart still more ? This is one of those questions not readily solved ; it may be affirmed that gratitude induced her to do everything in her power to give him pleasure, or that her desire to charm him arose from vanity ; it is probable both these feelings actuated her. She had not striven without effect, for Lord Welgrave complimented her upon her appearance ; and after dinner, with Lady Christabel, conducted her over the near portions of the estate claiming especial notice. The large fish-pond, hidden far away beneath the shadow of wide-spreading oaks, the tasteful *parterres*, the sparkling fountains that threw their spray high in the air, catching, ere it fell, the bright sunbeams, which converted each jet into a miniature rainbow ; the conservatory, too, stored with choicest flowers, came in for a share of attention and praise. Then the spacious drawing-rooms, grand dining-room, and study-inviting library, were visited and admired by their new mistress ; and lastly, Liliac accompanied her husband—Lady Christabel laughingly declining the venture—to the balcony that overhung the house, from whence was gained a clear view for miles. Immediately below them stretched the garden, luxuriant with flowers and redolent with perfumes, while extended to an immeasurable distance fields of corn and barley, that waved in graceful undulations in the faint murmuring of the summer's breeze. Gentle rills, that babbled sweetly as they glided between their grassy banks, gave, by their glistening brightness, a pleasing variety to the deepening colour of the heavy-eared wheat, the emerald of the meadows, and the sombre hue of the great firs, dotted here and there.

The sun, which had been very glorious all day, and now about

contentedly near him, her hand placed caressingly upon his shoulder, and her slight waist encircled by his arm.

"Were anyone to fall from here," he remarked, "nothing could save him from instant destruction. There is not even a shrub to catch at, or break the fall, which would be a distance of sixty feet."

"Really, the distance does not seem so great."

She was not thinking of what she said; her mind, as it would most inexplicably at times, had in an instant become possessed by scenes far away, by distant images, that stood between her and the near one of her husband.

"You must promise me, love, never to come here alone," said he, as they descended the narrow stone steps leading from the balcony to the garden. "I cannot endure the thought of the remotest danger for you."

She promised, still with her attention abstracted from him and his words, and immersed in deep remembrance. Willingly would she have laid for ever those ghostly phantoms of the brain, bravely she struggled against the gloominess that retrospection brought; but sometimes, by a mysterious affinity of thought, would by-gone scenes be renewed with a vividness and pertinacity that defied repulse. Then, giving up the unequal contest, the heart that had been buoyant with hope would sink into despair, and the smiling eyes and lips assume an expression of passive anguish. To account for these apparently unaccountable fits of depression, when on their tour, a hundred innocent circumstances had been pressed into the service. The cold, the heat, undue excitement, or want of rest, were taxed with her melancholy; but no such excuse could fully satisfy one so tenderly watchful as her husband; and from the terrible idea that her health was gradually decaying, as he had heard of her mother's doing, he began to link her moods of despondency with the disclosure made by his friend Herbert Randal. Not that he could be said to connect aught of guilt with the concealment; for, by an untraceable process of reasoning, he had arrived at the comfortable conclusion that the secret belonged to Sir Shenton, and that it was solely the responsibility of its keeping which affected Lilius.

No guests had been invited to meet the Marquis and his young wife, who spent the first few days chiefly in wandering about the

orders to issue, so much to think of and criticise; but with the ever-placid Lady Christabel to share her task Liliás found it agreeable. She had been too much in society to look upon this ball as a great event, and did not so much as inquire of Lady Christabel (who had given out the cards of invitation) the names of the guests; still she was just enough excited to be pleased at the prospect of making a wider knowledge of her future neighbours.

After the entrance of the first few visitors, who came at long intervals, they succeeded each other rapidly, and soon the elegant drawing-rooms were flooded with the aristocracy of the county.

Stately dowagers and lovely maidens, grey-bearded sires and smooth-faced striplings, congregated in happy intercourse.

The youthful Marchioness won golden opinions from all: some she charmed by her wit, others by a prettily-turned compliment; with many a smile was sufficient to intoxicate, and the few whom repartee, beauty, nor the incense of adulation could subdue, were conquered by perceiving how doubly kind she was to those whom diffidence, lack of talent, or good looks, obscured.

The self-complacent young lady was allowed to pass with a *petite phrase*, while to the less fair or to the delicate was addressed a few words of subtle sympathy, that was generally successful in imparting pleasure.

There are some people who cannot be brought out in company, and are never to be seen to advantage except in a *tête-à-tête* conversation, but Liliás, though pre-eminently fitted to adorn society, seldom took a real zest in its amusements. Before all the guests had arrived, her husband could discern the weariness in her air, imperceptible to indifferent eyes, and going up to where she stood, at that moment solitary, he asked if she were not pleased.

"Yes," she replied, languidly fanning herself, "they are very nice people, but—"

She had not time to finish her objection, whatever it may have been, for just then two ladies approached, the announcement of whose names she had not heard. The one was tall, dark, and haughty, past the meridian of life, but bearing tokens of distinguished attractions; the other fair and gentle-looking, and not more than twenty-five years of age.

Lord Welgrave advanced to meet them with a cordial smile, and, having shaken hands with both, introduced them to his wife as Mrs. Norman Lyttleton and Miss Lyttleton.

Liliás turned deadly pale, shrinking back a little. A faint cry broke unbidden from her trembling lips, and her hands involuntarily clenched themselves together, as if with dismay. Her husband, perceiving her perturbation, inquired if she were unwell.

"No—yes," she articulated, faintly, then struggling to main-

tain her self-possession, she drew nearer to Mrs. Lyttleton, whose mild blue eyes were fixed wonderingly and compassionately upon her hostess, and, after making some inaudible murmur of welcome and apology, Lillas moved away a few paces. No words had passed between her and Miss Lyttleton, who was intently gazing upon Lillas's countenance, as though desirous of penetrating into her very heart; and having finished her scrutiny, with a glance of withering scorn and hate, she crossed the room and took a seat beside her sister. Lord Welgrave now drew nearer his wife, and questioned her more particularly concerning the extreme disquietude she had evinced the moment the names of Mrs. and Miss Lyttleton were mentioned.

"I fancied your sensitive heart was wounded by their sudden appearance, on account of the dreadful fate that befel their near relative two years ago," commenced his lordship; then adding, with evident alarm, "or, darling, are you really ill? I never saw you look so ghastly white and terrified before."

"Did I indeed look so strangely?" returned Lillas, with still additional embarrassment of manner. "It was nothing, I assure you; only a momentary pang; it has quite left me now." For an instant she was silent, then resumed more composedly, and even with an attempt at cheerfulness, "I must have given my guests a strange opinion of me; I will go to them, and try to make amends for my seeming neglect."

"Do, then, love," was her husband's answer, "if you are sure that you are perfectly recovered; but I must return to Earl Vere; he will think me most uncourteous, for I see he has been looking this way some moments."

Lord Welgrave accordingly proceeded to join his friend, leaving his wife to regain the position she fancied she must have lost with her new acquaintances.

While crossing the room in search of them, Lillas caught a reflection of herself in one of the noble mirrors that so profusely adorned the walls, and was truly horrified to behold how wild was her aspect. Her face was perfectly colourless, and her eyes, preternaturally dilated, were like coals of fire in her head.

"I am a fool—worse than a fool!" she murmured to herself, and strove to smile away the scared look of her blanched features; but she could not: and by very slow degrees did they resume anything of their ordinary expression.

"I cannot go to them like this," she thought; so hastily turned aside to an alcove, shaded by flowing curtains, and filled by costly exotics. As she neared the recess, a murmur of an angry voice, mingled with a gentle remonstrance, greeted her ears, and before she could move to avoid interrupting the speakers, the

murmur assumed coherence, and rooted her to the spot by its import. The voice, which was unknown to her, was sharpened by strong feeling, and the words came in passionate, and quick succession.

"I tell you it is she," it vociferated: "I am convinced of the truth of what I say, by the sudden terror she exhibited. Did you not observe her startled pallor? That she knew us, I am certain; probably not by sight, but by name. Already I hate her! The panting for revenge, that has eaten me up, during these two weary years, demands now to be satisfied."

"Oh, do not say so, nor draw such hasty conclusions," rejoined a low-toned voice, which Lilius easily recognised as belonging to Mrs. Lyttleton. "You have no shadow of proof as ground for your assertion, and you do a grievous wrong to judge so harshly of a stranger. Consider the position of this lady: it is impossible!"

"No, not impossible," contradicted the harsh tones of Mrs. Lyttleton's companion, excitedly; "improbable I might even have thought it, had I not witnessed such a corroboration of her guilt in her looks. I had no thought—despite my boast that I should know the murderess whenever, or wherever, I met her—that this proud beauty was the creature I sought; but at sight of her distress my heart leapt with joy, for I felt that my triumph was at hand. I swear I will drive her from the lofty sphere in which she shines so brightly, the seeming embodiment of virtue, and make her appear in her true character. Her husband, who seems to worship the ground upon which she treads, shall cast her ignominiously from his roof, and deny the mention of her name before him. Oh! this dream of vengeance, so near realisation, renders me almost wild with delight."

A sigh was the only response to this, and the speakers emerged immediately from the shadow of the curtains, to the confirmation of Lilius's supposition, that the one was Hinda Lyttleton. Their hostess greeted them by a smile—somewhat constrained, possibly—and in the determination to please, recovered much of her composure, but though to a close observer her manner showed traces of inward contest, the generality of the guests thought how exuberantly gay she was. At length all departed, and silence and darkness took the place of revelry and light.

The Marquis of Welgrave slept soundly after the fatigues of the ball; and Lilius, the brilliantly lively, the envied and adored,

CHAPTER XXVII.

A RELUCTANT INVITATION.

THE morning after the ball, Lord Welgrave was seated in the breakfast-room, turning over a heap of letters, and his young wife, opposite to him (in the tastiest of morning dresses, and with the freshest of complexions), was steadily working a leaf in a group of wool-roses, the property of Lady Christabel.

"My love," said his lordship, abruptly throwing aside his papers. "I propose asking Mrs. Lyttleton and her sister to make a short stay at the Abbey, if it will be agreeable to you."

Lilias started slightly at this announcement, and the pink of her cheek faded a little, but she did not reply, or make any exclamation of surprise; and presently her husband added,—

"I was well acquainted with the late Mr. Lyttleton, and cannot do other than feel interested in his widow and sister; they came to Kent, I understand, with the intention of remaining upon a visit for a month or so with a friend of theirs near here; but as the eldest daughter of their friend—Mrs. Lewis—is seriously ill, they fear their further stay may be inconvenient, and unless we invite them, they will return to their home in Cambridgeshire immediately."

My lady had laid aside the wools she had been sorting, and, while her husband was yet speaking, crossed over to his side, placing her hand caressingly upon his head.

"I hope you will not think me unkind," she said, slowly, and with an air of much perplexity, "but Miss Lyttleton appears to be so unamiable a person, that it would be positively a task to entertain her, and I would rather she should not come."

"If that be the case, Lilias, they certainly shall not visit here, even for an hour; though I am very sorry that you should have conceived a distaste to either. They are so peculiarly situated, and I may say almost friendless; their voluntary seclusion from the world giving them no opportunity of forming new acquaintances."

Lord Welgrave spoke in accents of sadness, rounding his last sentence with a sigh; and Lilias, perceiving how greatly he was bent upon the gratification of his hospitable wishes, communed with herself—it it were possible to exist amicably for the space of a week with a woman of Hinda's acrid and suspicious turn of mind? and after many mental arguments, both for and against, she decided that it might be done; forthwith proceeding to acquaint her husband with the determination to sacrifice her own feelings to those of his friends.

This declaration of self-abnegation resulted, as Lilias intended

it should do, in causing Lord Welgrave to avow that, as she had given her happiness into his keeping, nothing he could in any wise prevent should disturb its tranquillity; and after a slight show of resistance on Lady Welgrave's part, it was resolved, that in order to escape the unpleasant necessity of requesting the Lyttletons to become their guests, they should themselves leave the Abbey.

"It would seem, under the circumstances, a direct insult, were we to remain here, and not ask them to spend a week or so with us," said Lilius; "so that for a short time, it is requisite we should absent ourselves from Kent."

"Where would you like to go?" her husband asked, somewhat ruefully; for notwithstanding his extreme love for his exacting wife, he could not but think it a hard thing, that he should be obliged to leave his beloved home, almost before he was settled in it, and solely on account of a womanly prejudice against a perfect stranger; yet go it seemed he must, so preparations were made that very day for an early departure to Sedgley; the place fixed upon by Lord Welgrave, as the pleasantest for their sojourn.

How provokingly opposed to our designs, will circumstances frequently turn out! and at the moment when everything appears propitious to our views, some unforeseen obstacle arises, ruthlessly scattering our glowing anticipations, and, with magic quickness, dissolving the "unsubstantial pageant" of our fancy. On the third day from the ball, and the one designed for the journey to Sedgley, Lord Welgrave was taken unwell; not thoroughly ill, but so feverish and ailing, that his physician deemed it imprudent for him to travel; indeed, strongly recommending him not to leave his chamber for a few days.

But the time at first deemed sufficient to restore him to his usual robustness and vigour, proved only, by its painfulness, to be a preparation for a period of greater suffering and vexation. He was at the end of the first week entirely confined to his bed, and at the expiration of another tedious seven days, only able to sit up in his room for a few hours at a time. His illness, without being dangerous, had been most weakening; and now, as he sat propped up by pillows, languidly sipping some nourishing broth, or being fed by his attentive wife with some tempting morsel, he looked so pale and thin, that it was grievous to behold him.

Although Lady Welgrave seldom left him, and was ever assiduous for his comfort, to a less partial eye than her husband's, it might appear that her attentions were more the produce of a sense of duty than the offspring of love.

Had she loved, she would have been harassed by a thousand fears for his life, but cold as was her regard for him, she escaped

all the agonies of doubt, and bore alike his illness and recovery with a calmness so stoical, that some were cruel enough to term it indifference.

When Lord Welgrave was so much better as to be permitted to take his meals out of his bed-chamber, and, supported by his wife, to saunter about the grounds, he again broached the subject of their proposed visit to Sussex.

"You know, dearest," he said, "that I shall not be allowed to leave here for at least another week; and as the Lyttletons, contrary to my expectations, have remained in Kent, we cannot do other than invite them; what says my dear wife?"

"That you are right, as you always are, and they shall come; it has quite grieved me to think that I may have influenced you against your friend's sister, who, after all, may be as agreeable as upon first acquaintance she seems the reverse."

Lady Welgrave spoke cheerfully, but with an effort: like most women she could not, having once conceived a prejudice, forfeit it easily; and despite her after-assurances, that she was convinced she had judged too harshly of Miss Lyttleton's rugged manner, she was not a whit the less impressed thereby, nor more easy at the thought of being in familiar contact with her.

However disagreeable the task of inviting Mrs. and Miss Lyttleton to her house, it must be done; and that too by her ladyship—for Lord Welgrave could not himself leave the Abbey, and disliked the formality of a written invitation; so with a smiling countenance, but inwardly perturbed spirit, Lillias proceeded to order the carriage, and to go through the business of her out-door toilette. My lady was soon ready, even having drawn on her gloves; yet she lingered in her dressing-room, casting hesitating glances at her maid, as if she wished to speak to her, though she was restrained by considerations of prudence: however, this indetermination was soon overcome.

"Emma," she said, quietly, "I intend inviting two ladies here, who are, I am inclined to think, of very inquisitive disposition. It is not my will they should come," she parenthetically remarked, with an impatient shrug of her graceful shoulders; "but that does not signify. I am just now going to call upon them, and beg the favour of their *charming* society—that is the phrase, I believe—and I take this opportunity of warning you against them, the elder lady particularly; she will, doubtless, ply you with inquiries of the most harmless nature, as a prelude to more important ones; and so, perhaps, may her companion, for though apparently a nonentity, her quietness may be a cloak to strong feelings. I need not say more—you understand me; and, remember, I rely upon your prudence."

Emma Adams, from long and intimate acquaintance with her mistress's affairs, was privileged to put many questions, which in a less favoured domestic would have been impertinent; and now she inquired the nature of the questions her mistress supposed they would be likely to make.

"Oh! they will most probably appertain to all subjects, for there is no limit to curiosity when once indulged; be careful on every point, but especially with regard to those that relate to me. Is it requisite, Emma," added Lillas, impressively lowering her voice to a whisper, "is it requisite that I should explain my fears? Can you not imagine the existence of persons who have an interest in learning the history of the last few years of my life? Is it difficult to fancy why these same persons should use every means to make themselves possessors of my secret?"

"Are then these ladies," commenced Emma, "related to—"

"No, girl, no," cried Lillas, with angry vehemence; "I did not say so, only that they may, through their connection with others, be led to inquire of you too closely concerning my affairs; for you are the only being here who knows that I was not always under the protection of my father previous to my marriage."

Emma, whose countenance was animated with a strange expression of exultation, suffered none of the secret joy she felt at this further proof of her mistress's confidence to betray itself in her voice, which was as coldly firm as ever, and the Marchioness, being too deeply absorbed in her own reflections to study the features of her maid, knew nothing of the ambitious flutterings that filled her heart.

A long silence succeeded Lillas's communication; she had apparently quite forgotten the carriage was waiting for her, and now seemed to have no room for other thoughts than those of the past.

More than ten minutes had flown, when she awoke from her fit of musing. "I declare," she exclaimed, "I shall barely have time to return from my visit before luncheon," and hastily left the room.

The Marchioness was informed that the ladies were at home, and was forthwith ushered, in solemn pomp, to the drawing-room occupied by the sisters-in-law.

Both Mary and Hinda were writing, and cast aside their pens, as her ladyship was announced; each greeted her politely, but

expressing, at the same time, with well-assumed cordiality, the pleasure their company would give to herself and husband.

The ladies were surprised at her request, and Mrs. Lyttleton would have respectfully, but decidedly, declined accepting the proffered courtesy, had she not been reduced to silence by a significant look from Hinda, who, after an instant's reflection, took upon herself the office of spokeswoman. In an offensively patronising way, as if conferring rather than receiving a favour, she informed Liliás that they would repair to the Abbey as early as they could arrange for their departure with their present hostess—Mrs. Lewis.

The delicacy of Mary Lyttleton's mind was greatly wounded by the uncourteous display of her sister's temper, and she strove to soften the affront put upon her visitor by the warm expressions of thanks and gratification with which she met the plans Lady Welgrave told her she had prepared for their entertainment; but her pains were needless, for Liliás was too much a prey to chagrin at having her invitation accepted, to remark aught that passed around her; and her mission being fulfilled, she quickly rose to go.

Mary extended her hand at parting; but Hinda drawing back, only bowed coldly to Liliás's graceful good-bye.

"It is impossible for me to think ill of Lady Welgrave," said Mary Lyttleton to her companion, as the sound of the carriage-wheels over the gravel path announced the departure of their visitors; "she appears so sincere in her affability, and so truly generous and noble-minded, that I am more than ever convinced of the unjustness of your horrible surmise."

Miss Lyttleton gave an ironical gesture, and her eyes emitted a flash of disdainful wrath; but she feared for once to overpower the weak-spirited Mary by an avowal of sentiments, contenting herself with muttering at intervals words of strongest hate and menace, against whom directed she knew best.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE PROGRESS OF SUSPICION.

IN honour of Mrs. Lyttleton's and her sister's-in-law arrival, the Marquis of Welgrave joined the family at dinner next day, though being warned to withdraw after the dessert. The entertainment of the guests was left to his wife and aunt. Seldom did the gentle Lady Christabel suffer a dislike of anyone to enter her mind; but with regard to Hinda, she fully sympathised in the feelings of repugnance confessed to by Liliás, and when called from the drawing-room by

the visit of a friend, experienced a something nearly assimilating to thankfulness.

During dinner Hinda had shone as she only knew how ; but no sooner had Lord Welgrave quitted their circle, than the cutting sneer, the poisoned inuendo, returned to her tongue. There must of necessity be a bitterness in the compliments she addressed to Liliás upon her matchless performance at the piano, a chill cast upon each light word and heedless smile.

Amongst many subjects, painting was introduced, which led to an examination of the rare pictures contained in the Abbey ; to each and all of which Hinda, inveterate fault-finder, had some objection to offer. The landscapes of a great modern artist, she allowed, might be passable, if he were less fond of dealing in sunsets of impossible gorgeousness ; another's genius was destroyed by a too beautiful display of yellow in his subjects, which, she averred, made them repetitions of autumn scenes ; and a third was so gloomy that his work might be taken for a representation of the Inferno, with the undying flames momentarily obscured by sulphurous vapours. If the lights and shades were altogether beyond exception, there was sure to be an opening for extravagant censure in the subject,—it was ill-chosen, or ill carried out : then, to prove that she was not at enmity with the race of artists merely, she began attacking the sculpture, and the choice and priceless gewgaws profusely scattered about. Yet Miss Lyttleton's taste was not uncultivated, nor originally imperfect ; it was to be attributed to the growing austerity of her nature that the beautiful in art could afford her no gratification. Amiable she had never been ; but the awful death of the only being whom she had profoundly loved and trusted, had done much towards expunging from her breast all generous impulses or lively sentiments, and in making her the un pitying judge of her species, the cynical critic she was become. Had Liliás been what she was often called, a veritable angel, she could not have borne with greater equanimity her visitor's irritating, almost insulting, remarks. Where she could make a concession, she promptly did it, and when this was impossible, good-humouredly smiled her disagreement ; for she had no desire to entangle herself in a discussion, and Mary, the timid and self-constrained, would have heard Canova's Venus likened to a plaster cast without breathing a syllable of dissent : all she wished was liberty to admire in silence. Returning to the drawing-room, from whence they had started, Hinda—perhaps tired of abusing what no one was bold enough to defend—took a new turn, becoming all at once confidential. She spoke of home, the home which years ago had sheltered the handsome boy whose love made it a heaven to her. It was strange and touching to witness the harsh lines in her face

melt away, and the cold suspicious eyes soften as she mentioned her brother, in a voice, oh! so different from that in which she had been lately dealing out complainings.

It seldom happens that, after early youth, we retain enough faith in the common bond of brotherhood to venture a tale of sorrow to those who have no participation in it, and from Hinda, usually so reticent, few would expect a revelation of secret feeling. But she seemed not to regard Liliás as a stranger, and having entered upon the inexhaustible topic of Norman's beauty, talent, and daring, she went on to describe, with horrible minuteness, the circumstances of his death. A wild, uncertain light grew into her eyes as she told her sad story, speaking with the low-toned earnestness and solemnity with which one invariably alludes to the dead.

Before she had half got through the sickening details of the inquest and burial, Mary Lyttleton left the room, too much oppressed to listen to a repetition of what was ever painfully present to her mind; so Lady Welgrave was her sole auditor.

Not from the beginning had she interposed the slightest observation, although Hinda paused for a moment at times to recover breath, or more perfectly recal the shadowy past. Her attitude was that of intent earnestness, and her face fully expressed the deep interest with which she caught up each word, as it fell from the lips of her guest. A spell indeed seemed upon her, whose control she was powerless to shake off; for without other motion than the restless locking and unlocking of her trembling fingers, she continued to gaze at the scowling features of Miss Lyttleton, cast into broad relief by the red glow of the setting sun, that streamed in through the window close to which she sat.

So greatly gratified did Hinda appear with the wrapt attention Liliás accorded her, that she stayed not in her recital, even when she had got to the return of the mourners, who, having left their burden beneath the cold earth, came back to a house made desolate by grief, but proceeded to speak of concerns more familiar and sacred to herself and sister; of the suspicion she had formed, that her brother had not died a natural death.

It might be supposed that in alluding to a surmise so fearful as this, concerning her deceased brother, she would exhibit a renewal of her early grief; but it was not so: her sorrow that Norman should have been so miserable as to terminate his career, when it had just begun, was overpowered completely by her hate of the unknown woman she presumed to be the cause of his incurable despair; and, consequently (by her reasoning) of his self-inflicted doom. Still, it seemed, she nourished the horrible thought of meeting with his destroyer, and revenging on her the anguish occasioned by Norman's death.

"I swore then," she enunciated, with a distinctness that made Lady Welgrave's flesh creep, while an icy hand appeared to stay the throbbings of her heart, "that I would find this woman; nor did I take this vow in vain. I have met with her in the highest society, and in the enjoyment of all that riches and the infatuation of an adoring husband can procure; but I will drag her from this proud eminence, and trample her beneath my feet. Great as may be the pain to me, I will say to the husband of this haughty and sin-stained woman, your wife has been the murderess of my brother. I can do this: a proof I have, an indisputable proof of her identity in——"

Lilias heard no more, nor did Miss Lyttleton complete her sentence; for when she saw that her hostess had fallen from her chair in a swoon, she moved to restore the unconscious form to its seat. The Marchioness lay, just as she had been placed, the leaden whiteness of her visage looking like the pallor of dissolution, and her eyes, not quite closed, directed towards Miss Lyttleton in a vacant stare.

"Pitiful wretch!" muttered Hinda, pushing away with no gentle force, the symmetrically rounded arm that rested lightly upon her black dress. "Pitiful, contemptible creature! I did not think you would have betrayed yourself so readily. With the aid of all your arts, you cannot hide your secret from me, play them off, as you may, upon your idiot of a husband, who deems you too good for earth."

A sardonic laugh followed this speech, and then, with a final scowl of malignity, she left the insensible Lilias to recover as she might. Unhappily her unconsciousness was brief, and no sooner did her lids uncloseth than she gave an apprehensive survey of the room in search of Hinda, whose exultant speech yet rung in her ears.

"The murderess of her brother—indisputable proof of identity," she kept repeating, as if the oftener she uttered the words the less meaning attached to them. Sense had not fully returned, and the very intensity of her horror prevented her from realising to the utmost Hinda's implied threat; but when her mind was at last awakened, and the full force of that deadly menace was revealed to her, with its attendant train of evil, she started up, fired with a transforming passion. The faded cheeks glowed bright under the exciting influence, and the dulled eyes flashed out a startling beam, as she stamped furiously upon the floor.

"I dare her to do it! I dare her to blast the reputation of one upon whom no taint ever rested! But she cannot, she will not so desecrate the memory of the dead; and yet—and yet—what will not a woman do to be revenged?"

The concluding sentence was delivered in a wild, passionate outburst, and a scared look of defeat passed over her face, but only for an instant was this expression visible. The next moment a smile of serenity played upon her lips. She cast back her head with defiant gesture, her set brows betokening a purpose fixed and deadly, as, between her set teeth, she muttered derisively—"You shall never do this. Were it in your power, which I do not believe, either you shall not live to triumph, or your victim shall be snatched from you in the hour when the attainment of your wishes seems most secure."

CHAPTER XXIX.

SECRET TERRORS.

THE following day was ushered in by a cold drizzling rain, and Lilius was wholly confined to the house, partly through the unpleasantness of the weather, and partly from a disinclination to move from her place by the library fire. She said she had caught cold the previous evening, in rambling out of doors after dark; and if the sickly hues of her face, and the dimness of her eyes—around which dusky circles might be seen—were any symptoms of that common, but troublesome malady, her suspicions of being its victim were not without reason. Never in the course of her life had she appeared more thoroughly averse to society, or more unable to bear any exertion, either mental or bodily; but, despite this, she made a great effort to join in, and promote the amusement of her guests; for Mrs. Lyttleton she had brought a large portfolio of engravings, many of Hogarth's, and of other celebrated painters, which Mary, with a most enviable sense of enjoyment, was engaged in admiring.

Lilius would have carried her politeness so far as to inquire what employment she should procure for Hinda, had not that lady been already engaged in taking down, first one book and then another from the shelves, only retaining possession of them long enough to enable her to scrutinise each fly-leaf in search of an inscription. She found a few, but always those of Lord Welgrave, till, coming to a lower shelf, which had before escaped her observation, she was gratified in finding a more miscellaneous collection of books, one or two with "Miss Bellamy" written in them by the hand of Miss Majendie, who never failed, when putting the name of a pupil into a volume of whatever kind, to add the very desirable information of the school address.

Miss Lyttleton re-read the address of the Misses Majendie two

or three times, then diligently continued her search, with a settled look of cruel pleasure about the corners of her compressed lips, and a gleam of satisfaction in her eyes. Some of the volumes were marked by Liliás, with her name in full,—“Liliás Gertrude Bellamy,”—and these, more than any others, riveted the attention of Miss Lyttleton. She examined most carefully every turn of that fine, clear writing, and still with increased satisfaction. Lady Welgrave watched Hinda's strange occupation, anxiously for a time, but by-and-bye her sensitive nerves became accustomed to the monotonous sound of taking down and putting up the books.

Neither of her guests had spoken since breakfast more than a dozen words, so she might be readily excused for seating herself at a desk, with the intention of employing her time by writing. But to whom should she send? To her father, now her spirits were so depressed, and her heart so full of care? Could she burden him with a letter, which, composed in her present frame of mind, must bear the impress of an enduring sadness? No, no! she must not write to him. Should she, then, to her friend, Ada Hartop, who was now in the full enjoyment of that most bewilderingly rapturous season, courtship? Could she be so unfeeling as to damp the glory of the young girl's blissful vision by fears for her friend's sanity?—for Liliás felt that if she wrote to Ada just then, she could not refrain from touching upon subjects that would lead her unsuspecting mind to no other inference than that she was mad. To whom, then, could she write to fill up this dreary morning? To her gentle cousin, the deceived, heart-broken Maude?

“No, poor girl,” she thought, “you have enough to bear, without being harassed with fears for me.” Then she remembered that had she the will to write to Maude, she was unacquainted with her direction, since no answer had yet arrived to Liliás's announcement of her marriage; so it was highly probable that Mrs. Ashton and her daughter had departed for Italy, or were on their way to England, or—Liliás trembled with apprehension at the bare idea—possibly Maude was dead, and her mother too much stricken by grief to inform her of it. As this thought rushed upon Lady Welgrave, she experienced a strength of sorrow and regret, beyond what she imagined herself capable of feeling except for those troubles intimately connected with her own life. She had of late been so much in the habit of thinking only of her immediate concerns that the deep, and seemingly inexhaustible, well of sympathy in her heart had been nearly dried up. It would have been singular if she could, having once so completely concentrated all her energies in the task of concealment, easily withdraw her thoughts from the contemplation of this great object; or, when she succeeded in

arousing her interest for aught unconnected with her secret, keep it long fixed.

Very quickly did she forget the pang the supposition of Maude Ashton's death had excited, and return to the reigning idea of, What shall I do to make this weary day come quicker to a close? She had heard and read of persons who, when oppressed with a sorrow they dared not reveal, accustom themselves to commit their thoughts to paper, and by a daily relation of their most secret hopes and fears, lessen the sum of their anxieties; but this, she foresaw, might end in giving to her accuser a fatal instrument against her, so she dared not avail herself even of so poor a solace. Heaving a despairing sigh, she cast aside her pen, without having written one word, and left the library, murmuring an inaudible excuse for her retiring.

Lord Welgrave had been again consigned to his chamber, by the imperative command of his medical attendant, who declared that if he persisted in sitting up as late as upon the previous evening, he would most likely suffer a relapse. This, of course, he was anxious to avoid; though not in a spirit of resignation did he consent to be imprisoned in his bed-room, while feeling himself quite well enough to join the ladies. Upon leaving her visitors, Liliás proceeded to her husband's apartment, glad to exchange the miseries of reflection for a little conversation.

He hailed her approach with a tender smile, as he ever did, saying, while he gazed into her glorious eyes, and smoothed her glossy hair—

“My Liliás, who could do other than love you? It may be profanity to call you perfect, but to me you are so.”

She smiled, not in playfulness, nor pleasure, but with a sadness that was almost bitter; and not perceiving it, he added, with a semi-seriousness of manner, “Do you really think, dearest, you have an enemy in the whole world?”

Liliás's parted lips gave forth a laugh, as reckless and unjoyful as her smile had been, answering carelessly, “I hope not.” Yet while she said the words, a vivid picture of Hinda appeared before her, with vindictive hate and fiend-like triumph stamped upon her features. It was the look she had seen before she fainted on the previous evening, and she almost swooned anew as the blighting spectacle rose to her mind's view.

“Miss Lyttleton is very little like her brother,” observed the Marquis, after a short silence. “He was much handsomer than she can ever have been, and in disposition he was the gayest and the most dauntless. At Oxford—it was there I first met him—he had countless admirers. I may say that, with his contemporaries, a belief in his unattainable superiority formed an article of faith, and

really he excelled in everything he attempted. No one," ran on Lord Welgrave, pursuing his recollections "could beat him at athletic exercises, and in mental acquirements he distanced nearly all; but more brilliant than his other talents, was the one which has since challenged the praises of the country, his power as a debater. Whenever it was known he intended to speak, the 'Union' was filled, and such was the might of his eloquence that no opponent could stand before it. It signified not which side of an argument he espoused, he made it appear, against all previous convictions, the right. Men are less envious when young, and those who differed from him, were generous enough to applaud his genius, for a genius he was. He wrote with as great facility as he harangued, and was, beside, a poet of no mean order."

"I—I have seen a collection of his early pieces," said Lilius, "Did he publish anything after?"

"I think not, except political pamphlets, thrown off to meet the emergency of the moment. He cast himself too early, and too violently, into the arena of party excitement, to allow time for perfecting his unfinished performances, which embraced many subjects. His mind was perpetually panting after new food, his ambition ever eager for additional conquests; for instance, having achieved success in the translation of a Greek play, he commenced writing a tragedy, casting that aside, ere it was fairly completed, to write against the foreign policy of the then ministry: and thus it always was with him."

"How did you renew your acquaintance after his marriage?" asked Lilius, suppressing an inclination to yawn.

"I came upon him in the lobby of the House. I had not seen him for above three years, and engaged to dine with him next day. He had not been married very long, but I fancied they appeared unsuited to each other, and exceedingly sorry I was, for I still entertained a strong liking for him."

"Yet he was heartless and treacherous," broke out the Marchioness, hot with passion; "he would sacrifice anyone's happiness to his own."

individual could withstand his influence, when he chose to exert it fully. I do not know," he continued, jestingly, "that I should so readily have invited his wife and sister had he been alive to accompany them."

"Why?" asked Lady Welgrave, simply, for though her ears retained the words, her mind, otherwise occupied, failed to perceive their meaning.

"Because—," and he hesitated, as if half ashamed to go on, "I wish my darling's heart to hold no thought which belongs not to me."

Lilias raised her eyes furtively to his, and her face crimsoned, but instead of chiding him, as another wife would have done for entertaining the remotest suspicion of her fidelity, she murmured as if unconsciously:—"Yes, he was more than fascinating. I have seen his portrait," she resumed in her natural strain; "and that, together with your and his sister's description, makes me feel as though I had known him."

No more was said concerning Norman Lyttleton; and Lilias, mindful of the courtesy due to her guests, soon joined them; she found them both occupied, therefore scrupled not to pick up a novel, hoping in its pages to forget herself.

The romance was strongly woven of love, misery, and crime; but notwithstanding its interest, and Lilias's strong desire to detach her mind from painful reflections, as often as she caught at an exciting passage, memory would interpose with its too real sorrows to prevent a participation in the fictitious. Under favourable circumstances, Lilias was ever quickly led away by works of imagination, and finally succeeded in concentrating her attention upon the book, when she became as deeply absorbed in the plots of the wicked and the counterplots of the good, the short-lived triumph of vice over virtue, and the ultimate dethronement of the former for the perpetual glorification of the latter, as if there had been no other beings existant, save the shadowy ones of which she read, and no space on earth except the room in which she sat.

With a start of surprise, and a feeling of regret, she was recalled from the ideal to the tangible, by a summons to luncheon. Thus it ever is, the most heavenly pleasures are followed by earthly duties; and soup and sauce oft take the place of sentiment and sonnets.

The sun broke out about three o'clock, with a brilliancy that seemed to bespeak an intention of making recompense for his previous neglect, and soon gave to the trees, shrubs, and flowers, a beauty they had been in want of during the early morning. Inspired by the genial warmth, Lady Christabel proposed a drive, which she

remarked would be very agreeable after the sedentary occupation they had been engaged in ; and the visitors seconding the proposition, it was without delay agreed upon. The carriage was soon ready, and the party set off, leaving their hostess still reading ; Lilius had excused herself from accompanying them on the score of fatigue ; really glad of the opportunity of being alone.

As the carriage drove from the door, Lady Welgrave cast aside her book, which, by a strange inconsistency, no longer enchained her fancy ; and set about the task, sometimes the most difficult of performance, the task of calm reflection. Her mind was sadly confused ; her thoughts rushing promiscuously through her brain, each clashing against its fellow, and fighting for predominance, until she was almost crazed.

"Why is it," cried she distractedly, "that I cannot decide upon any course of action ? Nothing but the memory of those dreadful words haunts me ; and strive as I may, I can complete no scheme for defeating the purpose I see she has in view. I was not wont to be so readily shaken from my composure as to betray my emotions, but the shock came upon me so suddenly, and at a time when I deemed myself safest. What am I to think ? What does she know, and what surmise ?"

Cast into a mass of doubts and bewilderments, Lilius covered her face with her hands. The myriad of terrors and perplexities threatened to render her brilliant intellect a mere chaos. Ignorant of her foe's designs, she was prevented from forming plans to counteract them, and being utterly unacquainted with the extent of Hinda's suspicions, it would be unwise to set about the task of refutation. So she argued, deciding to suffer affairs to take their course, without acting in a manner likely to retard or hasten them.

"I have sometimes thought," mused the wretched Marchioness, "of the horror of madness, and said that I would kill myself rather than risk a fate so fearful. But what I now feel seems approaching insanity ; these mingled and strange delusions, this burning, aching brain, this utter prostration, alternating with fits of unnatural gaiety and desperation,—what can these be unless the forerunners

suffered no change, as she saw her mistress in the extremity of mental anguish, shivering upon the sofa; approaching softly, and laying her hand upon the drooping arm, she said placidly, "Does anything ail you, my lady?"

The question recalled Liliás's scattered senses, but she did not immediately answer, being desirous of composing her accents and expression before raising her head. When in a few moments she looked up, though her face was pale, and the existence of a preternatural wildness was visible in her black orbs, nothing in her countenance was sufficiently unusual to cause particular notice. In a little while, with an effort well nigh superhuman, she had brought herself to a perfect calmness of bearing, and as a security against a relapse, fixed her eyes upon Emma's pretty, but passionless features. Liliás felt convinced the girl had something to communicate to her, and, moreover, that she would leave it unsaid unless interrogated concerning it.

"I am perfectly at liberty to hear what you may have to tell me, Emma, though my head aches badly."

It was singular that, notwithstanding the confidence existing between Liliás and her maid, the former never, except upon occasions of absolute necessity, alluded to it, however distantly; and to admit that her sufferings were the result of her fears, was what she would have disdained with immeasurable scorn. She had in some way or other imbibed the notion that the girl was far from disinterested, if not wholly devoid of sympathy for her woes; and having allowed herself to think thus, she could not but entertain a species of repugnance to her person; yet on this occasion she was not sorry to be decoyed from her miserable reflections by Emma's company.

There was by nature no taint of hypocrisy in Liliás's composition, and what she had acquired was of little avail in shielding her sentiments from those who were thoroughly acquainted with her character; but these were only her nurse and her maid. No disguise could effect her purpose of concealment with them; they could follow every winding of her thoughts—the former from a species of intuition, the latter from long and

thought your ladyship might not like Miss Lyttleton to hear of it."

The latter sentence was boldly appended, with a view to ascertain how far Lady Welgrave was in the thralls of her visitors ; but beyond bringing to Liliass's cheek a momentary flush of indignant warning, there was nothing gained by the experiment.

With a gesture of conscious power, her mistress shook her disordered tresses, her look seeming, by its lofty contempt, to declare that she felt herself equal to a whole army of detractors, and ready to confront them.

THE GREAT RIOT IN NEW YORK

IN the autumn of 1848, Mr. Macready, after an interval of some years, paid another professional visit to the United States. He arrived in New York the latter part of September, and the public were notified that he would shortly appear in a round of Shakespearean characters at the Astor Place Opera House. A rumour had obtained very general circulation, that Mr. Forrest attributed the ill success he had met with in England, to the enmity of Mr. Macready, whom he believed to have exercised to his prejudice the influence he was supposed to possess with the editor of one of the leading journals of that country. Apprehensions therefore were entertained that the partisans of the American actor might offer some disturbance to the performance on the occasion of Mr. Macready's first appearance. These fears, however, proved to be groundless; for when this gentleman opened, on the 4th of October, in *Macbeth*, he was enthusiastically greeted by a crowded and fashionable audience—no attempt being made by any person in the house to offer him the slightest annoyance. At the close of the tragedy he was called before the curtain, and, after expressing his acknowledgments for the warm reception he had met with, he went on to say, that the presence of such an assemblage as the one he then addressed, was the best refutation of the calumnies of those who had asserted that he was "too old and effete to embody the creations of the great dramatist."

The allusion in the latter part of this speech was, as events subsequently proved, most unfortunate. It was held to point directly at Mr. Forrest—who was reported to have expressed himself in exactly the words quoted—and was bitterly resented by his friends. No immediate notice, however, was taken of it, and, on the 25th of October, Mr. Macready closed a very successful engagement with the "*Merchant of Venice*." He then made an extended tour through the principal cities of the Union, and did not return to New York until the following spring.

In the meantime many of the partisans of Mr. Forrest did not hesitate to avow their determination to avenge the affront they conceived had been offered to their favourite, by driving Mr. Macready from the stage, should he again venture to perform in that city. On the 7th of May, however, he appeared once more at the Astor Place Opera House, selecting, as he had done on a previous occasion, *Macbeth* for his opening piece. Mr. Forrest, as if to challenge a direct comparison between their performances, played the same part, on the night in question, at the Broadway Theatre.

Although no one was ignorant that some disturbance might be anticipated at the Opera House, the city authorities, with culpable negligence, omitted to take the necessary precautions for the preservation of order; not more than half-a-dozen policemen being on duty at the theatre. Even before the curtain rose, it was obvious from the character of a majority of the audience in the amphitheatre and parquette (pit), that they had come there bent on mischief; for, under ordinary circumstances, the prices of admission would have deterred persons of the class to which they belonged from attending that place of amusement. The play, nevertheless, was allowed to proceed with but little interruption, until the entry of Mr. Macready. His appearance was the signal for the commencement of the wildest uproar. He was assailed with the most opprobrious epithets; missiles of various kinds, including several bottles, were thrown at him; and, finally, three or four chairs were hurled upon the stage from the amphitheatre. Finding, at the expiration of a few minutes, that all his attempts to obtain a hearing were vain, and that his remaining longer on the stage would not only endanger his own life, but the lives of the other performers, Mr. Macready, who had throughout this disgraceful scene displayed the coolest courage, bowed with dignity and retired. The performances being thus brought to an abrupt conclusion, the audience quietly dispersed.

The next day several of the leading citizens of New York—feeling how deep a stain would rest upon the character of the city were an eminent foreign artist permitted to be driven permanently from the stage by a brutal mob—addressed a letter to Mr. Macready, expressive of their deep regret for the insult that had been offered him; and pledging themselves that, if he would again appear, adequate precautions should be taken to prevent a repetition of the disgraceful scenes which had characterised the previous evening. This gentleman, at the earnest solicitation of several personal friends, acceded to the request of the committee, and the following Thursday was fixed upon for the resumption of his performances. In the meantime, placards, purporting to emanate from the British residents of New York, were posted on the walls in various parts of the city. The crews of the English steamers, then lying at Jersey City, were called upon to come forward and sustain their countryman against “a clique of American ruffians,” and the whole town of the same name.

bills that the crews of the British steamers had threatened violence to all who "dared express their opinions at the English Aristocratic Opera House," and working men were urged "to stand by their lawful rights." It is, perhaps, scarcely necessary to add that the "appeal to English seamen," and the reply to it, were but an ingenious *ruse* on the part of those who had instigated the riot on Monday night, to inflame the populace against Mr. Macready. This was subsequently distinctly proved upon the trial of "Ned Buntline," one of the rioters, who was shown to have been the person who gave the printer the order for *both* sets of handbills.

That a still more serious disturbance was threatened on the Thursday night was now no longer a matter of doubt, and to do the city authorities justice, it must be acknowledged that, on this occasion, they fully appreciated the gravity of the emergency, and made adequate preparations to preserve, so far as lay in their power, the peace of the city. On the day in question a large body of police was ordered to attend at the Opera House, and, in case this force should not be sufficient to maintain order, the Seventh Regiment New York State Militia, commanded by Colonel Duyree, and two troops of horse belonging to the eighth regiment, under the command of General Hall, together with the Hussars attached to General Morris's brigade, were held in readiness. They formed two bodies, one of which was stationed in the park, and the other at Centre Market. This force, although considerable, was not in excess of what would be necessary in case the mob were disposed to push matters to extremity, for, as will be seen, the Opera House was so situated as to be exposed to attack from more than one quarter. The block of buildings in which it stood* forms a small right-angled triangle, the base whereof rests upon Broadway, the perpendicular upon Eighth Street, and the hypotenuse upon Astor Place. The theatre itself was situated at the junction of Astor Place and Eighth Street, and fronted on both. These streets at this point run into the Fourth Avenue, which here diverges from the Bowery, and at the place of intersection there is a large open space or square, capable of holding several thousand persons.

In anticipation of a riot the rush for tickets was very great.

tremendous a rush at the doors—notwithstanding a notice had been posted up stating that all the tickets were sold—that several of the entrances were obliged to be closed. It was with no little difficulty that those persons who were entitled to admission made their way through the throng, and some of the less adventurous abandoned the endeavour, and returned home. The police used every exertion to preserve order, and successfully resisted all attempts that were made by the mob to force an entrance. Inside, the house was well filled, but not crowded; and the amphitheatre—in which the main body of the rioters had been posted on the previous Monday—was not more than half full. The general appearance of the audience was respectable; but a noticeable feature was the almost total absence of ladies, their being but a solitary female in the dress circle, and not one in any other part of the theatre.

It was hoped, at first, that there would be no serious attempt at disturbance, either within or without the building; yet, in order to be prepared for the worst, the windows were carefully boarded up, and the doors barricaded—precautions the utility of which was afterwards made manifest. The first two scenes of the play passed over quietly enough; but the entrance of Mr. Macready, in the third scene, was the signal for a perfect storm of cheers, groans, and hisses. The whole audience rose, and nine-tenths of it, who were friendly to Macready, cheered him enthusiastically, waving, at the same time, their hats and handkerchiefs. Many persons, however, in the parquette, second tier, and amphitheatre, hissed and groaned with equal zeal. The tumult lasted ten or fifteen minutes, when an attempt was made to restore order by a board being brought upon the stage, on which was written, "The friends of order will remain quiet." This silenced all but the rioters, who continued to drown all sound of what was said upon the stage. Not a word of the first act could be heard by any one in the house. The policemen present did little or nothing, evidently waiting orders. Finally, in the last scene of the act, Mr. Matsell, Chief of Police, made his appearance in the parquette, and, followed by several of his men, marched directly down the aisle to the leader of the disturbance, whom he secured, after a short but violent struggle. One by one the rioters were then seized and carried out, the greater part of the audience applauding as they were borne off.

Before the second act was over, something of the play could be heard, notwithstanding the wild uproar of the mob without. Mrs. Coleman Pope, as Lady Macbeth, first obtained a little silence, which ended, however, immediately on Mr. Macready's re-appearance. That gentleman went through his part with the most

perfect self-possession, paying no regard to the tumultuous scene before him. In the meantime the Chief of Police and his officers were active in their exertions to clear the parquette and amphitheatre of the few remaining rioters, and, before the close of the act, the theatre, inside, was tolerably quiet. The crowd without grew more violent each moment, and showers of stones were hurled against the windows on the Astor Place side. As one window after another was smashed, pieces of brick and stones rattled against the boards that had been placed behind them ; till the Opera House resembled rather a fortress besieged by an invading army, than a place meant for the amusement of a peaceful community. Sometimes heavy stones would dash in the boards, and a number of policemen were constantly occupied in nailing up and securing these defences. The attack was sometimes directed against the theatre on the Astor Place side, and sometimes on the Eighth Street side, but seemed to be the most violent on the latter. The lobbies were so "raked" by the fire of missiles from the mob, that the only safe places were the boxes and parquette. Nor was perfect security to be found even there ; for a stone, weighing some pounds, came through an upper window, struck the chandelier, scattering the glass ornaments in all directions, and then fell in the middle of the parquette, fortunately without injuring any one.

The fourth and fifth acts of the play were given in comparative quiet so far as the audience were concerned. When Mr. Macready delivered the lines :—

"I will not be afraid of death and bane
Till Birnam *forest* come to Dunsinane,"

he was loudly applauded, and also where he said,

"Our castle's strength will laugh a siege to scorn."

Never, perhaps, has a play been performed under such peculiar circumstances. In the last scene there was no occasion to resort to the usual artificial means to convey to the audience the impression that Macbeth's castle was sustaining an assault ; for the constant crashing and thumping of heavy stones against the windows and doors of the theatre, and the terrible yells of the crowd without, formed an accompaniment to the tragedy far surpassing in effect anything that the appliances of the stage could supply. Towards the close of the performance a violent attack was made upon one of the doors by the mob. A party of policemen, armed with their short clubs, sallied out and secured a number of the rioters, who were brought in and placed in a large room under the parquette, where those who had been arrested within the house were already confined. These men, to the number of thirty or forty, endeavoured to break out by battering down the thin partition walls of the room. They were detected in this attempt, and a strong guard

placed over them. They then, in the most reckless manner, set fire to the place, hoping, in the confusion which must necessarily result, to effect their escape. Fortunately the fire was discovered and extinguished before it had made any headway, or the consequences might have been fatal to many, and to none more so than the rioters themselves.

In the midst of the turmoil without, and the excitement within the house, (for a rumour that an attempt at incendiarism had been made soon spread among the audience) the tragedy was played out, and the curtain fell. Mr. Macready was called out and cheered, as was also Mr. Clarke, who played Macduff. The audience then began quietly to leave the house by the Eighth Street entrance. Considerable apprehensions were entertained by many of the assemblage that, on emerging into the street, they would be roughly handled by the mob, who, aware doubtless that all who had offered any disturbance to the performance had been arrested, might be disposed to ill-use those who were to be regarded as friendly to Mr. Macready. When, however, the doors were opened, everyone was surprised to find the street which, but a few minutes before, had been filled with an infuriated crowd, was now perfectly empty, and a cordon of soldiers drawn across it at either end. The audience were directed by the police to seek egress from the street at its junction with Broadway, as, in the direction of the Bowery, a dense crowd was assembled, through which it would be impossible for them to make their way. As the people obeyed the instructions given them, and hurried towards Broadway, a volley of musketry was fired on the Astor Place side of the Opera House. This, naturally enough, alarmed them considerably, for they knew not to what danger, in another moment, they themselves might be exposed. Hastily passing, therefore, through the line of soldiers, the majority of the individuals who had composed the audience rushed across Broadway, and sought safety in the side streets. Some, however, the writer among them, whose curiosity was stronger than their fears, turned round the corner into Astor Place, and were just in time to witness the *dénouement* to the tragedy that was being enacted there. But before proceeding to describe the scene which there presented itself, a brief account of what had previously transpired will be given.

The mob which, as has already been stated, began to assemble round the Opera House at an early hour of the evening, at first contented themselves with hissing or addressing insulting remarks to every well-dressed person who entered the theatre. But, soon tiring of this rather insipid amusement, and growing bolder as the darkness increased, they proceeded to break the street lamps in front of the building, and to smash the windows. It happened,

unfortunately, that a sewer was being opened in the Bowery, close to Astor Place; and large piles of the cobble stones used for paving the carriage-way lay ready to hand, and furnished most effective missiles to the rioters. More than one attempt was made by them to force an entrance into the Opera House; and, although defeated each time, it soon became obvious, from their rapidly increasing numbers, that they must ultimately succeed in effecting their purpose, if some more effectual opposition were not offered to them than that which could be made by the police, who were altogether too few in number to guard the building on all sides. Towards nine o'clock, therefore, a messenger was sent by the Chief of Police to the officer in command of the troops stationed at Centre Market, requesting their immediate presence at the Opera House. Three squadrons of cavalry and the Seventh Regiment of infantry at once marched up Broadway to Astor Place.

The cavalry first arrived on the ground; and there can be but little doubt that had they understood their business, and been well mounted, the streets might have been cleared without shedding a single drop of blood. They consisted, however, principally of milkmen and carmen; persons belonging to those classes usually joining that arm of the service, from the circumstance that they can ride their own horses when required to parade, while other citizens would be obliged, on such occasions, to hire the animals they made use of. The troops were saluted with hisses and groans from the mob, followed—as they attempted to ride through Astor Place—by a shower of stones. Many of the men were severely hurt, and several knocked off or thrown from their horses; while those who still kept their saddles, found it was quite as much as they could do to manage the frightened animals they bestrode, without attempting to act on the offensive. In less than five minutes, in fact, they were in a hopeless state of confusion—all order and discipline lost. The officer in command, therefore, withdrew them as quickly as possible—the mob saluting them with ironical cheers as they retired. Almost immediately afterwards, however, the Seventh Regiment arrived on the spot. It numbered only three hundred men, but it enjoyed then, as since, the reputation of being the best drilled corps in the State of New York. The soldiers formed on Astor Place, and with some difficulty—for the street was densely crowded—made their way through to the Bowery, the mob slowly receding before them. They were pelted so violently with stones that the men were ordered to load with ball cartridge, in anticipation that matters might be pushed to extremity. They did so, and then passed round the theatre into Eighth Street. They formed in two lines, four deep, in front of the Opera House, and, marching in opposite directions, drove the

crowd before them, with levelled bayonets, completely clearing the street. Having posted a guard at each end, the troops then marched again into Astor Place, but, on account of the denseness of the crowd, were obliged to file along the side-walk. When they reached the centre of the Opera House, they formed once more in line, and endeavoured to repeat the manœuvre they had successfully executed in Eighth street. But the mob pressed so closely upon them that it was impossible for them to do so. They succeeded, indeed, in driving the rioters about two-thirds across the street, but were assailed, in every direction, by showers of heavy stones and other missiles, which compelled them to fall back upon the pavement, where their rear was protected by the walls of the theatre. Many of the soldiers were struck down or severely injured, and were carried into the Opera House. Several shots were now fired at the troops, from revolvers and pocket pistols, by individuals in the crowd. Captain Shumway received a ball in his leg, and the cheek of General Hall was grazed by a bullet. Two of the privates were also hit, but not badly hurt, by buck-shot, with which the weapons of one of the rioters were loaded. The volleys of stones which the mob continued to direct against the soldiers were, however, more deadly in their effect, and as man after man fell out of the ranks—some mortally wounded—the exasperation of their comrades became intense, and repeated demands were made by them for permission to fire. This was, for some time, refused; and several attempts were made by Sheriff Westervelt and Recorder Tallmadge to address the rioters, in the faint hope that they might be able to induce them to refrain from further acts of violence. It was in vain, however, that they did so, for the noise and confusion were such that their voices were scarcely audible at a distance of ten paces, and, on those who did hear them, their words made not the slightest impression. At last, after having repeatedly warned the crowd of their intentions, they most reluctantly gave the order to fire.

Some doubt was, at a later period, thrown upon the legality of the action of these officials on this occasion, the Riot Act not having been previously read. But it happened that no

THE GREAT RIOT IN NEW YORK

had been, or would be used, were rather exasperated than terrified, by this demonstration. A hoarse murmur of rage ran through the crowd, and a simultaneous rush was made upon the troops. Their peril was imminent, and again the order was given to fire, but this time as low as possible. It was at this moment that the writer, and those who accompanied him, reached the spot. The street-lamps, together with those belonging to the Opera House, had been extinguished, and the darkness was only briefly illumined by the quick scattering sheets of flame, which flashed from the muskets of the soldiers. In so dense a crowd, nearly every shot told. Several of the rioters fell dead, while many were more or less severely wounded. For an instant, however, the mass of the mob believed that blank cartridges only were still being used, and a cry of derision ran through their ranks. But they were quickly undeceived, and then, with hideous imprecations, they charged the troops, the first line of which received them with levelled bayonets, the second firing from behind. For a few minutes the contest raged furiously; showers of stones being hurled against the soldiers, who replied by firing volley after volley, as rapidly as possible. The scene was a terrible one, the wild cries of the rioters mingling with the shrieks and groans of the wounded and dying. Finally, the mob, whose stock of ammunition (stones) was exhausted, fell back upon the Bowery to obtain a fresh supply. As soon as it was perceived that they were retreating, orders were given by General Sandford to stop firing. But, almost immediately afterwards, observing that hundreds of the crowd were engaged in arming themselves with stones, preparatory to making another attack, orders were issued to the troops to advance and clear the ground. The men were drawn up across Astor Place, and were ordered to fire obliquely in the direction of the square at the junction of the Fourth Avenue and the Bowery, at which spot the mass of the rioters were congregated. They gave them one volley, and with such terrible effect, that the mob, losing all heart at last, fled tumultuously, leaving seventy-two of their companions, dead or dying, upon the ground. Of the number of the wounded, it is impossible to form anything like an accurate estimate, as the greater portion of them were carried off by their friends, but there must have been at least a hundred.

However strongly one may condemn the motives by which these men were actuated, it is impossible not to regard with some degree of admiration the courage with which, for some time, they maintained the unequal conflict. It was not, however, this quality alone that sustained them. There is no braver people than our own; yet an English mob, under similar circumstances, would, most probably, have fled at the first volley. The causes of the

unusual resolution displayed by the crowd on this occasion were twofold. In the first place, the individuals composing it were, like most Americans, accustomed to the use of firearms from early youth; and, as Cooper has observed, in one of his "Leatherstocking" tales, their familiarity with the weapon used against them had the effect of disarming it of half its terrors. In the second, they knew that the troops opposed to them were simply citizens, like themselves, and they regarded them with none of that mingled fear and respect with which in England the professional soldier is looked upon by the masses.

Soon after the crowd had dispersed, Mr. Macready quitted the theatre; and as it was considered unsafe for him to remain in the city, he left at once for New Rochelle, escorted by a party of friends. He passed the remainder of the night at that village, and the next morning started for Boston, from which port he sailed in a few days for England.

As it was conjectured that the rioters might only have retired for the purpose of procuring arms, a company of horse artillery, known as Yates's Battery, was sent up to Astor Place, and several field-pieces, loaded with grape and canister, were placed in front of the Opera House. No further attack, however, was made that night upon it. The next day, the Mayor issued a proclamation. It called upon all good citizens to assist in preserving the peace, by abstaining from assembling in large bodies in any part of the city, and especially in the vicinity of the Opera House. It warned, also, the badly disposed that the whole military force of the city would be called in requisition, if necessary, to maintain order.

Notwithstanding this edict, public meetings were held in the Park, at which the proceedings of the authorities the previous evening were vehemently denounced; and the people were urged, in excited language, to avenge their slaughtered fellow-citizens. One of the speakers—a notorious character of the name of Rhynders, president of a band of ruffians known as the Empire Club—after stigmatising the Sheriff and Recorder as murderers, and indulging in the most virulent abuse of the gentlemen who had signed the letter to Mr. Macready, wound up by advising those whom he addressed *not* to burn down the Opera House.

This hint was quite sufficient, and towards night a large crowd had again collected in the vicinity of the theatre. They found, however, every avenue leading to it strongly guarded. Astor Place and Eighth Street were occupied by several regiments of the State Militia, and loaded cannon planted at either end. The attitude of the populace was most menacing, and several times a collision appeared imminent between them and the troops. Stones began to be thrown, as on the night before; but the officer in com-

1

SONGS AND BALLADS OF LANCASHIRE

To many minds the name of Lancashire conveys only ideas of cotton. It exists in their vocabularies merely as a synonyme for a place of wondrous wealth and immense manufacturing energy, a district where Gold reigns supreme, and where men are too eager in their pursuit of riches to pay much attention to the higher aims of life. Even now, by many people a Manchester man is supposed to have a huge pocket, instead of the head and heart usually accorded to the sons of Adam. Even now, there are persons whose ideas of the scenery of Lancashire is derived from seeing the smoky, grimy streets of Manchester, and who listen with feelings of incredulity to those who speak of her pleasant cloughs, and murmuring rindles.

And yet "time-honoured Lancaster" can boast of scenery as beautiful as any in the land; and we, who have been nursed in her lap, look with pride on her fertile valleys, decked with pleasant farms "bosomed high in tufted trees," even although in their neighbourhood may be heard the noise of the steam-engine and the whirr of the shuttle. Dear to us is the old county, with its hill-side tarns, its brown moors, green lanes, and spreading trees. And her merchant princes have ever been ready with liberal hand to encourage art and intelligence of every class, as the noble public institutions of the county amply testify. And those who think of her humbler sons as mere human calico-spinning machines, would alter their views if they visited them in their homes. There they would meet men who, toiling all day long in the factory or the machine shop, devote their leisure hours to studying the plants and flowers with which the Creator has decked the bosom of old mother Earth. Others sedulously filling case after case with rare and beauteous entomological specimens. Some are numismatists, others dabble in antiquities; nor have the followers of James Butterworth and other self-taught mathematicians yet died out. Every village and hamlet, almost, has its library of one sort or another, and the contents of some of these storehouses of knowledge would greatly astonish the subscribers to Mr. Mudie.

"Nor is there wanting 'mid the busy throng.

and Tannahill could reach that universal approbation which has been accorded to them; and it is so rich in nervous idioms and racy expressions, that it is well worth the necessary study.

These thoughts have been suggested by a perusal of the two volumes issued by Mr. Harland, the first embracing the "Ballads and Songs of Lancashire, chiefly Older than the Nineteenth Century;" and the second consisting of "Lancashire Lyrics: Modern Songs and Ballads of the County Palatine." The first volume we may soon dismiss; some of the pieces in it have only a very slight connexion with the County Palatine, and those which fairly come within the scope of the work have very little of literary excellence about them; they are worthy of preservation, and occasionally throw a curious light upon the social history of the past; but Lancashire could not boast before the present century of a ballad literature of any note or beauty. There are one or two exceptions to this rule; for instance, the charming old song of the "Lancashire Witches," and honest John Byrom's quaint lyric, "Careless Content," of which we quote a verse:—

"I am content, I do not care,
Wag as it will the world for me;
When fuss and fret was all my fare,
It got no ground, as I did see.
So when away my caring went,
I counted oost, and was content."

The importance of Lancashire, in this as in other things, rests mainly on what has been done in the present century; and here the tender care of Mr. Harland has gathered together a bouquet of wild flowers, many of them bright of hue and sweet of odour. His volume gives no unfair idea of the lyrical treasures of the County Palatine. Some of the Lancashire authors are well known to the lover of literature, and have places in our libraries independent of their share of this compilation; thus Charles Swain's delicate, thoughtful lyrics are already classic, and the racy ballads with which Ainsworth has garnished many of his novels need no mention here. So, too, Bamford and Prince have achieved a reputation outside of that circle which usually hems in "our local poet."

Some of these lyrics will be old acquaintances, even with those who have never trod the Lancashire heather; but, in addition, they will find many new friends worth knowing. What can be more graceful, tender, and ethereal than this portrait of

MARGARET!

"Artist's chisel could not trace
Such a form, with so much grace;
Never, in Italian skies,
Dwells such light as in her eyes;
Sweeter music ne'er was sung
Than hangs ever on her tongue;

Roses have not such a glow
 As that upon her brilliant brow.
 All that's bright and fair are met
 In lovely, charming Margaret.'

This is from a poem which was written by William Rawlinson, a canvasser for a local directory, who was drowned whilst bathing in the Thames.

But the most interesting and important portions of the book are those which contain the songs of the Lancashire people, the work-a-day literature of that great hive of modern industry. The words appealing to the hearts of the people have become household words; the songs that are sung to the accompaniment of the flying shuttle, that go echoing through the noisy mill, and fill the workman's cottage with pleasant music; songs that may be heard alike in the streets of smoky Manchester, and in the green country fields in the pleasant summer evenings.

There are certain characteristics which are more or less shared by all these productions, and somewhat puzzle us for a definition of poetry which shall fairly include these outpourings of the Lancashire singer. He is no grand minstrel, setting forth, in words sublime, the bloody triumphs of the battle-fields, nor does he indite a "woeful ballad to his mistress' eyebrow;" his songs are not of blossoming hawthorn and the golden sun of June, nor does he sing the war and strife of human passions in their highest intensity; and yet his strains are truest poetry, and instinct with human interest.

The short and simple annals of the poor, their virtues, loves, and failings,—these are the subjects of his rhymes, and fitter subjects for poets of this class could not be found than the working men of Lancashire. The genuine Lancashire lad is a being worthy of study; his deep sense of humour, his patient endurance of adversity, his life-long struggle with want, his indomitable perseverance, his love of home—all point him out as one of a remarkable race; and, despite his sometimes rough exterior and uncouth language, your real Lancashire lad is one of nature's gentlemen at heart.

And well have these characteristics been reproduced by men like Edwin Waugh, Benjamin Brierley, Sam. Bamford, Samuel Laycock, and others. These men have been, to a great extent, self-educated, themselves a portion of the people whom they describe; and their pictures may therefore be taken, not as the random impressions of a casual stranger, but as the conclusions of persons thoroughly acquainted with the men whose lives and feelings they so graphically describe. Take the quaint song of "The Weaver of Welbrook;" what an illustration of the Lancashire character it affords!—what humour, and, at the bottom, what a noble spirit is manifested by Owd Jone!

"Aw care no' for titles, nor heawses, nor land,
 Owd Jone's a name fittin' for me;
 An' gie me a thatch wi' a wooden dur latch,
 An' six feet o' greaownd when aw dee.

Then Margit turn reawnd that owd hum-a-drum wheel
 An' mi shuttle shall fly loike a brid;
 An' when aw no lunger can use heat or finger,
 They'n say, while aw *could* do I did."

The domestic virtues which we have already mentioned as an important feature in the Lancashire nature find true and skilful exposition in the now famed lyric; "Come Whoam to thy Childer an' Me;" and further illustrations of this feeling may be found in "Eawr Bessie," by Mr. Bealey, in "Welcome, Bonny Bird," by Mr. Laycock, and in many other lyrics contained in this collection.

It is impossible for us to quote these here; but before we draw our remarks to a close, we wish to introduce to our readers a ballad that exhibits some of the features we have mentioned. It was written by the late John Scholes, and is entitled—

THE LANCASHIRE WITCH.

"An owd maid aw shall be, for aw'm eighteen to morn,
 An aw myen to keep sengle an' free;
 But the dule's i' the lads, for a plague thi were born,
 An' thi never can let one a-be, a-be,
 They never can let one a-be.

Folks seyn aw'm to' pratty to dee an owd maid,
 An' at love sits an' laughs i' my ee;
 By leddy aw'm capt at folk wantin' to wed,
 Thi mey o' tarry sengle for me, for me,
 Thi mey o' tarry sengle for me.

There's Robin a' milld—he's so fond of his brass,—
 Thinks to bargain like shoddy for me;
 He may see a foo's face if he looks in his glass,
 An' aw'd thank him to let me a-be, a-be,
 Aw'd thank him to let me a-be.

Coom a chap t'other day o' i hallidi trim,
 An' he swoor he'd go dreaun him for me;
 Hie thi whoam first an' doff thi aw sed bonny Jim,
 Or thae'll spuy! a good shute, does ta see, does ta see,
 Thae 'll spuy! a good shute, does ta see.

Cousin Dick says aw've heawses an' land, an' some gowd,
 An' he's planned it so weel, done yo see;
 When we're wed he'll ha' th' heawses new fettled an' soud
 But aw think he may let um a-be, a-be,
 Sly Dicky may let um a-be.

Ned's just volunteered into the roifies recruits,
 An' a dashing young solduir is he,
 If his gun's like his een it'll kill wheer it shoots,
 But aw'll mind as they dunnot shoot me, shoot me,
 Aw'll mind as they dunnot shoot me.

He sidles i' th' lane, an' he fumbles at th' yate,
 An' he cooms as he coom no for me;
 He spers for eawr John, bo' says nought abeawt Kate.
 An' just gies a glent wi' his ee, his ee,
 An' just gies a glent wi' his ee.

He's tall an' he's straight, an' his curls are like gowd,
An' there's summat so sweet in his ee,
'At aw think i' my heart, if he'd nobbut be bowd;
He need na' quite let me a-be, a-be,
He need na' quite let me a-be."

In conclusion, we may say that many of these Lancashire rhymers possess much humour, pathos, and dramatic power, and running through all their writings is a vein of tenderest humanity, of brotherly love for their fellow men, however degraded by sin and misery.

WILLIAM E. A. AXON.

"OUT OF CHARITY"

CHAPTER XIX.

RALLYING AFTER A DEFEAT.

WE must now go back to Deverington Hall. Better acquainted than Mrs. Ferrier or Miss March with the danger so well escaped, we know that, besides Mr. M'Quantigan, Eva had one enemy, and but one enemy, then and there hunting after her life. During those few, but eventful minutes, what had that still bitterer foe of Eva's been doing?

Her apartment, as we said, was somewhat remote from that which, after careful considering, she had managed to assign Miss March. And she did not venture, at the crisis of the affair, to attend at the scene of events, "lest occasion should call, and show her to be a watcher." When all the house had appeared quiet, she had stolen down the narrow staircase, with a box of matches in her hand, had lighted the lamp in the vestibule below (which her ally would extinguish on his going out again), had opened the glass door, which had a spring lock, had placed the square-shaped bottle of chloroform beside the lamp, and had then retreated to her own chamber, to await the successful issue of the deed preparing.

The very wisest plan of all might have been to lie down, and (if she could) sleep till the morning should bring its great discovery. But something kept her from doing this. I know not if it was remorse. It must not be supposed that this wretched woman could rush, unhampered by all restraining scruples, into deep and unfamiliar guilt. Uncomfortable she certainly did feel, but scarcely remorseful. It is surprising what a hardness of soul may come of the constant brooding over thoughts and longings which are altogether selfish. Miss Varnish was, indeed, unselfish in one thing,—in her baleful affection for her Irish seducer. She looked upon Eva as a younger and more beautiful rival; and thus her genuine love was the parent of her liveliest hate. The one garish flower that bloomed over all the bleak waste of her heart was a thing distilling deadliest poison. That Eva's other pretensions might bring ruin to her designs on Mr. Campion, was a much less cause of offence, though it had its influence over her. In every point of view Miss March was detestable, a being brought into existence in order to blight her own; and therefore her enemy prepared to crush her without compunction. She felt

tolerably confident of the success of the design. All hitherto had gone so well. The greater difficulties had been so utterly smoothed away. Mr. M'Quantigan, crafty and bold at the same time, was so entirely to be depended upon; his own interest in the young woman's death was (as Miss Varnish understood it) so deep and dreadful, that he would surely allow no blunders of his own to hinder him from succeeding. But Miss Varnish thought she should be more tranquil could she know that all was accomplished, ere she so much as laid her head on the pillow; and such assurance she might obtain, without ever stirring from her chamber.

The streak of lamplight, which ran through the glass door into the garden, was visible from Miss Varnish's own window, and its extinction would be to her the signal that the Orangeman had done his work, and withdrawn his presence from the house. She sat by that window, with no light in the room, holding aside a corner of the blind, and looking at the bar of yellow light which dashed the pale radiance of the moon.

When she had waited awhile, she saw a shadow cross that light, and vanish, as into the house. The distance of the room in which she sat from the glass door prevented her from seeing his figure more distinctly. Yet it was enough to know that he was come, and that a very few minutes might now deliver them both from their greatest danger. She scarcely expected to hear his footsteps in the house. Her chamber was very distant from Eva's, and the man would move and act with all the quiet which the awful nature of his task demanded. But she let the blind drop into its place, and listened, in case any sound should reach her ears. She heard nothing—nothing certainly that would have arrested the attention of any watcher not on the alert for sounds. She would remain exactly where she was, and, in five minutes, or ten, look and see if the light had vanished. Had she kept her eyes on that garden all the while, she would have seen, but a few minutes later, a second shadow cross the stream of light, and also vanish into the house, like the former one; and a sight so strange and alarming might have led her into some sudden action on her own side. No footfall smote her ears. In fact M'Quantigan ascended those stairs with such a cautious pace that it took him several minutes to pass to Eva's room. Mrs. Ferrier, though arriving so far behind him at the Hall, was therefore quite in time to interrupt the deed ere it was well begun; and her tread, hurried as it was, had been soft enough to escape the ears of the anxious watcher in that distant chamber. That person, after several minutes, looked out to see if the light were gone. No, it was there still. But nothing untoward could have happened. The unbroken stillness of the house was a sufficient warrant that all had gone, or was going, well. She held

her face to the glass, and waited to see that patch of yellow light disappear. Still it burnt on. Miss Varnish began to be rather uneasy. That her confederate might prefer a still later hour of the night would not have been any wonder at all. But he was certainly come. He was in the house. What could be detaining him? Of his own accord he had appointed a somewhat earlier time than that suggested by Miss Varnish, because he should have so many hours more to quit the neighbourhood before daylight came.

The house-clock struck one; the dewy moon was shining down on that garden, with its many-coloured asters and other autumnal flowers; and still that desecrating bar of yellow crossed the silver sheen of the night. The woman sat up for a long while after, now turning her ear to catch any sounds from within, and then once more looking down at the light which would never go out.

Yet, surely, he could not be waiting in the house all this while? Miss March had certainly been somewhat sleepy when she retired; it was hardly possible that, since lying down, she had become wakeful again, and only that could have hindered or delayed the work in hand. Miss Varnish felt she could not, dared not, lie down, with all this terrible uncertainty upon her. But, very likely, all was as simple as possible. M'Quantigan, successful in the great matter, had omitted the minor precaution of extinguishing the lamp as he left the house. Miss Varnish waited a few minutes more, and looked again. The light was burning yet. As she had seen his coming in, so now she felt sure that he had accomplished his awful purpose, and had gone out. But if it were so, the lamp must be extinguished by herself. Mr. Campion was a fussy, suspicious man, and would promptly couple the fact of Eva's being found dead in her bed with any little irregularity in matters of household arrangement. At all events, the risk must not be run. When her belief had grown into certainty, Miss Varnish, still without any light in her hand, softly opened her door, stepped forth into the passage, and listened. All was as still as a house wrapt in sleep ever can be.

To reach Eva's chamber, she must walk the whole length of a long passage, then through a swinging baize door, to the head of a short flight of stairs, down those stairs, and along a shorter passage, to the door so carefully indicated by her in her directions to M'Quantigan. She walked this way, advancing and listening alternately, until she was close to the door of the fatal room. One thing was evident. Whatever her accomplice had forgotten, he had remembered to manage the thing quietly. Nobody had been disturbed; indeed, nobody slept very near that room. The nearest apartment occupied by any one was that of poor Mrs. Campion herself; and to her eyes sleep was wooed by the soporific draughts

regularly administered by order. Miss Varnish glided on. She did not purpose entering the room. All, no doubt, had been done, and thoroughly done. But it was a cruelly careless thing of her friend to forget the lamp, and so entail upon herself this task, which might threaten danger and discovery. She was turning towards the staircase up which the light came; and in so doing, came exactly opposite the door of *that* room.

What had possessed the Irishman? He had left it open, wide open. He was not there; for the streaky moonshine which came in at the window was the only light there present. Whither had all his caution betaken itself? She had a yet more serious cause for asking the question, as she stepped forwards to close the door. Just in a patch of moonlight on the floor, a letter was lying. Coming forward, and stooping to look at it, she saw that it was the letter which she herself, two days before, had written to Murphy at Leamington. Mrs. Ferrier had, indeed, brought it with her, as evidence of the fearful danger which really impended over Miss March; and to avoid all possible delay, she had carried it into the house in her hand. In the unexpected confusion of the actual issue, she had dropped it on the floor, and forgotten it until too late. When she reflected, she was not quite sorry that one or both of the conspirators would be sure to pounce upon it, and, for their own sakes, destroy it. Miss Varnish clutched it with a bewildering mixture of anger and surprise. It was well to know that M'Quantigan had not quitted Leamington too late to receive this. But why had he been so mad as to retain it—to carry it with him? Or, if he needed it, as a guard against his mistaking the room, it was not like his usual caution to have left it in that place. Why, it might have lain there until morning, to be an evidence against herself of the most damning kind! However, the danger, so unaccountably hazarded, was averted. She had the letter in her hands, and—the work was surely done. No sleep, which has an awakening, was ever so still as the soundless slumber of this room. And yet, so unlike himself had the murderer proved, that it would be well to see if any other matter had been left to breed suspicion.

The room was pervaded with the sickly pungency which proceeds from chloroform. Groping on the floor Miss Varnish detected the broken bottle which had held it. Now it occurred to her that

distant from the bed across which the victim was surely lying. No doubt, all this botching of his work was attributable to the great hurry of it. Possibly some special reason had presented itself, which made it important for him to get quickly away; and, satisfied with the principal thing, he had trusted to his vigilant Emma to step in and detect and remedy all minor deficiencies. It was a compliment to her sagacity, but one which might have been bought at the very highest price at which a compliment was ever sold. Then a worse fear took hold of her. In such haste to get away, was it certain that M'Quantigan had made all safe in the main thing? Chloroform, before it can bring to pass the reality of death, must produce what is only a semblance of it. Now, might it be that the worker had left his work undone? Miss Varnish had never seen another person under the influence of that anæsthetic; and she knew not but that the stupefaction soon to pass away, might, while it lasted, be undistinguishable from actual death. Eva lay still, it was certain; but was it, indeed, the stillness not to be broken? It cost her a shudder; but Miss Varnish felt that she must discover this at once. The bed was a French bed, with a curtain flowing over the head and over the foot. Miss Varnish stepped on tiptoe to the side.

Gracious Heaven! The bed was deserted. Living or dead, her enemy and rival was not *there*! Not there, nor, as there was light enough to show her, in any other part of the room!

It was a discovery for which nothing had in anywise prepared her. Her mind and her body reeled alike under the awful shock. A stab, more piercing still, went through her heart when she recovered sense enough to ask herself—“What can it all mean?” Too surely, as she supposed, was the meaning of it all to be apprehended. M'Quantigan had played the part of a double diabolical deceiver. He had professed himself anxious to destroy Eva; he had really been anxious to repossess her. Very likely he had known that into Mrs. Tarring's house he would not be admitted, and he had played this series of tricks only to get hold of Eva when nobody was by to interfere with her; and so together they had eloped, and gone, and she was the wretched, miserable dupe of them both!

How they must be laughing at her credulity now! And there was her letter, left on purpose to bring her to utter ruin; or (at the very best), as a hint that silence would be wisdom on her own part. There was a moment of utter desperation, when she resolved that, happen what might to her, they should not peacefully enjoy their infamous success. But it was hard to find a way of baffling them; she had very carefully destroyed all his letters to her; and if not, the perfidious wretch could appeal to what he had done as a proof that his intentions had been innocent all along. He might, indeed,

get great honour out of the thing, as one who had professed to enter into an atrocious design that he might more surely prevent it. But could it—could it be—that he had been thus treacherous all along? Perhaps compunction had won him over at the last moment. But then it was torturing to think that Eva's beauty should have so much power, and she become nothing to him in her rival's presence. There was not a drop of comfort for her raging, burning heart, decide the matter which way she would. What would become of her? Perhaps it was well that the situation imposed on her the necessity of securing her own safety. After standing, she knew not how long, in the deserted room, she hastily looked about for any further indications of what had occurred. The chamber had little or nothing to tell. The elopement, it would seem, had been a hasty one; a thing for which her own presence under the same roof very amply accounted. She crept away out of it, leaving the door as she had found it; for the absence of Eva must and would be detected. She went down the stairs, and put out the light in the vestibule, then retreated to her own room, and all the while without hearing a single sound that threatened discovery. She was in an agony of humiliation, to be duped and deserted thus; but that she need fear detection seemed scarcely a probable thing. Her letters to M'Quantigan had not been so plainly expressed but that she might repudiate a criminal meaning. The last and most dangerous of them was now in her hands. Eva herself had bought the chloroform, and the bottle, now in fragments on the floor, might still be identified as one that had stood in Eva's room at Chelford, and there would only be Miss March's own word for her enemy's having requested her to buy it; and, safest of all, the girl had many enemies, as, indeed, a beautiful light-minded young woman was very certain to have. Mrs. Dowlas (a near relation) and Mrs. Ferrier (seemingly an intimate acquaintance) were her very bitter foes. No simulated enmity there; and no fear but that, by most of her own sex, her complaints would be scouted and discredited. So Miss Varnish might calculate that Eva had done her worst already. A bitter "worst" indeed it was.

She crushed up the letter in her hand, and prepared to burn it. The newspaper extract was inside, as she had sent it. She took a match from off the chimney-piece, struck it against the rough surface of the grate, then lighted with it the letter she was holding

a single sleeper undisturbed within it. She listened again. That dreadful cry was not repeated, but the spell of night was broken by it, as she expected.

Feet began to shuffle; doors to open; and voices, in various accents of surprise and alarm, to echo from floor to floor. Should she herself rush out and inquire, or should she wait to be aroused by some one else? While she was still considering, the tread and the voices sounding nearer and louder from minute to minute, a hand was on the lock of her door, and somebody entered unbidden. She knew at once that it was Mrs. Prudden, the housekeeper. The woman was wringing her hands, and groaning. She struggled to tell what she had to tell.

"Oh, Miss Varnish! Oh! have you heard? Oh! dreadful!"

"Heard? No. What is the matter? I was lying down fast asleep, and I thought I heard a noise. Is anybody ill?"

"Ill? Oh, dear! oh, dear! Poor lady! Oh! Miss Varnish, she's dead—she's dead!"

"She's dead? Where? How? What? Has she——? She looked very well all the evening."

"Oh! Miss Varnish, what do you mean? She never could be called well. But, oh! I never thought it would come like this. Oh! awful—awful!"

"But where is she?—where is she?"

"Where! Oh! in her own room, to be sure, miss. There she lies, struck all in a moment, poor dear lady! Poor master! he's with her now, and they've sent for a doctor. But there's no hope—no hope: not if she had all the doctors alive. And poor Miss Emily to be away from home. But perhaps it's as well she should be. Oh! my poor dear lady! Oh! my poor, dear, good mistress!"

"Who? What? What has happened to her?"

"What must happen one day both to you and to me, Miss Varnish. But, oh! I hope not in this awful and sudden manner. I know, miss, you must think it too dreadful to be true. But it is true. She went off, and all, as it would seem, in a moment."

"How very awful!" And Miss Varnish, at that moment, really felt it to be so. "How did it all happen? What was the cause of it?"

"Oh! miss—that, indeed, we can't tell. Betsy, who slept in the next room to her, as usual, thought she heard her walking about, and looked round the room, but saw nobody there. And then, all of a sudden, she heard her scream out in that dreadful way. It awoke me, miss; and, I should think, must have awoke you, miss. And, whatever it was—whether she had had a fright in her sleep, or whatever it might be—Betsy found her gone already—as the doctors said, you know, miss, if she ever had any

great fright she was likely to go. Oh! dear, dear, miss! it's upset me that awful that I don't know where I am, nor what I am doing. And so, I'm sure, it's the same with all. Poor, dear lady!"

Miss Varnish considered whether it would be wise to be the first in alluding to their guest. Mrs. Prudden unconsciously helped her out of it.

"Pray, miss, do you know whether any one has been to Miss March all this time? Poor young lady! she'll be very frightened. Shall I go to her?"

"I think you'd better not: better not disturb her."

"Oh! miss, she can't be asleep, I'm sure. Why, you know my poor, dear mistress's room is near her's. I think I'll go."

"Very well—perhaps you had better do so."

Mrs. Prudden went; and presently she returned to say that Miss March's room was empty. It did not strike her with any great surprise. Eva, awakened by the dreadful sound, and made aware of its cause, had become too nervous to remain alone, and was, perhaps, with one of the servants at that moment. And we may notice at once that no very great astonishment was felt when, on the following morning, it was found that Eva had left the house altogether. It was no very unaccountable act, after all. A stranger to the family, and admitted as a guest for only one night, she had been startled with tidings the most mournful and terrible. Embarrassed at the thought how inopportune, at such a moment, was her presence, and, it might be, with a shrinking abhorrence of the presence of death, she had hurried home to Chelford on foot, and in the middle of the night. And had there been more in her departure to puzzle the household, that awfully sudden death left them little thought for any other thing.

It was, after all, more awful than astonishing. His wife's existence, Mr. Campion had long been warned, hung upon a slight string, which the shock of a moment might snap. That the fatal stroke should have come in this manner was wonderful indeed. What terror could have been there to visit her? Some startling dream—some fantastic posture of the light and shadow, suggesting terrible thoughts to her half-awakened eyes? To such a cause was the now irremediable mischief to be surely attributed. There was

while after, he only thought how lively and happy, before the mysterious blight fell upon her, Eliza had made his home for him. Poor Emily was sent for from Dieppe; and she actually arrived on the Friday night. An inquest was, of course, rendered necessary. It occupied no long time. The lady had died from disease of the heart. The dreadful shriek which had rung through the house proceeded either from the sudden terror which might have wrought the evil, or from the momentary agony of the fatal crisis. The disease, but for that utter collapse into which her nervous system had fallen, might have continued dormant and harmless for as many years as are given to man.

The funeral arrangements were conducted as is usual. The ceremony was to be a very quiet one, and the day was fixed for the following Tuesday, the 21st of the month. Miss Varnish (and it was really well for her) was cumbered with much unusual occupation. The purchase of mourning, the preparation for the guests of next Tuesday, and, indeed, the whole machinery of management, rested now, more than ever, upon herself. And it was well to be forced away from her inward thoughts, uncomfoting as many of those thoughts had been rendered.

But in the pauses which always occur in the greatest stress of business, and which were given to her in the bustle of that week, she did consider within herself—what were her prospects now? Mrs. Campion was dead: and if Mr. Campion were not a shameful deceiver, he would, after a decent interval, put Emma Varnish in her place. Mr. Campion was the one good card which, in all the game of life, this miserable woman had played well. She had not, indeed, had many opportunities, but she had had her chances; we do not mean of marrying, but of general well-doing.

She had attended a good school, and had read novels instead of her lessons. Her old aunts had inundated her with good advice—really good advice, though they knew not any way of making it palatable; and she had allowed its taste to blind her to its excellence. She had held good situations, and lost them again, through her incurable addiction to deceitful dealing. She had made shipwreck of her self-respect in her friendship with Murphy M'Quantigan. But at Deverington Hall she had really learnt so much wisdom as to avoid all censurable proceedings; and, favoured by a rare combination of circumstances, she had almost secured the reversion of a most excellent position and establishment; which reversion had suddenly fallen in. Now, how would her prospects be affected by the *other* event of that most awful night?

If her enemies—for she must count M'Quantigan as such now—if her enemies restrained themselves from accusing her to the utmost, it would, she felt, be on their own account, not hers.

Perhaps they would shrink from dragging their dishonourable love into the light of day ; and, safe from her jealousy in future, would accord a contemptuous oblivion to the past. But, supposing them bent on revenge, could they bring the conspiracy home to her ? Upon the whole, she thought they hardly could ; and, aware of their impotency, would probably abstain from the effort. Miss Varnish did, however, think that she should like to inquire after Eva. How far had that old Mrs. Tarring been taken into the confidence of that guilty pair ? She was much too respectable to countenance the affair in its actual aspect. She, probably, had been made a dupe, as Miss Varnish had, although in a different way. It might be of very great consequence to enlighten her on Eva's real character, and win her opinion, if not on Miss Varnish's side at all events, from the side of the enemy. To pay a visit to Chelford, before the funeral, might be a slightly irregular proceeding ; but Mrs. Tarring was an old friend of the deceased lady, and it was very easy to contrive an occasion for such a thing. So, on Thursday, Miss Varnish, having requested the presence of the coachman, James, expressed the necessity which lay upon her of taking a drive to Chelford.

"I'm sorry, James," she said, "to trouble you at such a time ; and it's painful, in this melancholy state of things, to be seen abroad ; but there are one or two things which must be got, and I also want to call on old Mrs. Tarring. You know how intimate poor Mrs. Campion and she once were. I haven't asked Mr. Campion—really, I can't have the heart to trouble him—he's so overwhelmed with grief ; but I am certain he would wish it."

Now, every servant in Deverington Hall was well aware that Miss Varnish might, by-and-bye, command their services with a much more absolute authority. And she had been wisely humble in all her dealings with them, and they were ready to serve her without grumbling.

So James had the carriage ready when desired. It was the close carriage, as best befitted that occasion. Miss Varnish left it at old Mrs. Tarring's garden-gate, and walked alone to the door. It was opened by Patterson, who, in another instant, made as if she would shut it again in the visitor's face ; however, she kept it open, but not as inviting Miss Varnish to enter.

For Mrs. Ferrier's sake, Mary Patterson had not been informed of all the wickedness meditated by Miss Varnish against Eva. She did, nevertheless, know that she stood before one who was the deadly enemy of her beloved young mistress—for in such a light she always looked on Eva ; and it needed not Mrs. Tarring's positive orders to inspire her in guarding the door at this moment.

"I called," said Miss Varnish, "to tell Mrs. Tarring that the funeral is fixed for Tuesday. I hope Mrs. Tarring is well. Can I see her?"

"No, ma'am—that I am very sure you can't; and it would be as much as my place is worth to let you in. I'll give her your message."

"Oh, dear! I fear your mistress is very ill. I'm truly sorry."

"No, ma'am—she ain't ill; but she said you wasn't to come in. Had you any other message to leave, ma'am?"

"Well—yes. I hope Miss March got her things, which were sent after her, all safely. But couldn't I see Miss March for a minute or two?"

"Miss March, as you call her, ma'am, is gone away from here. Her things have been sent after her. They came here all right."

Just at this moment a door within was partly opened, and Mrs. Tarring's voice was heard, inquiring—

"Patterson, who is it? What is it?"

"Please, ma'am, it's—it's Miss Varnish."

"Oh, law!" And from the sound of what followed, it seemed that the speaker had retreated further back.

"Oh, law! you mustn't let *her* in. I'm a very old woman, but I'm not quite tired of living yet. When I am, I'll send for her, you may tell her. There: look and see if the things in the hall are safe, and shut the door upon her. Shut the door in her face—in her face, Patterson!"

And shut the door was. And Miss Varnish had nothing to do but to screw her face into some composure, and return to the carriage at the gate. She informed James that she had found poor Mrs. Tarring too ill to see her, and entered the brougham, to be driven elsewhere.

It may be a wonder that Mrs. Tarring did not feel her personal safety somewhat questionable with all that had come to pass; but she thought that neither Mr. M'Quantigan nor Miss Varnish would be very desirous of attracting the further notice of Chelford; and the one policeman of whom Chelford boasted was deep in love with Mrs. Tarring's servant, not Mary, but the younger one, so

should step in, and tell Mr. Campion he is going to marry a murderess?"

But there was little good in meeting misfortune half way. Months must elapse ere the matter forthcoming could be decently whispered about; and Mrs. Topping's blabbing tongue might, ere then, have met with its lasting quietus. Still, she was such an eccentric old woman, so audacious in saying and doing things inadmissible with most people, that one was never safe at her hands. However, calamities which cannot be averted by effort must be left to the chapter of accidents. There was a flower of safety to be plucked, if Miss Varnish had the resolution, out of this nettle danger. She might, and she must, cast the Irishman out of her heart now. It could not be too hard—it should not be too hard—to rend herself away from all regard for that faithless, selfish, perfidious, brutal love of her's; and, thus forgetting and scorning him, she might hope to subside into a tranquil and decorous happiness. She thought in her heart—

"If I do get married to Mr. Campion—if I do become mistress of this house, and am rich for life—I will not abuse my position. I'll make nobody else unhappy. On the contrary, I'll do a great deal of good amongst the poor, &c. I'll be no unkind stepmother to that poor Emily. So far from that, if it depends upon me, she shall be allowed to marry at her own desire. It will be enough for me to know that my miserable days of dependence are over; and that I am to be tossed about from stranger to stranger no more."

Occupied by thoughts like these, Miss Varnish passed the days which intervened before Tuesday. Mr. Campion had intimated to her that his brother Herbert would possibly be a mourner at his sister-in-law's grave. He was expected in England at this very time; and a letter had been already despatched to the hotel at which he was likely to arrive on reaching London. Nevertheless, his return was so far a matter of uncertainty that the ceremony would be fixed without any reference to him.

Emily, as we said, came home on the Friday; and her real sorrow put out of mind—at least, for a while—the dislike that existed between herself and her ex-governess. Towards Friday or Saturday, Miss Varnish began to think that she detected a certain air about the household for which even the sudden and serious bereavement scarcely altogether accounted. The servants, with whom she came into contact, appeared to walk and speak as under the constraint of some invisible peril. In addressing her, they were absent and hesitating, and her evil conscience leaped at once to the terror that something about Miss March had become known to them, and that they were all regarding herself with an abhorrence hardly to be suppressed. Too desperately anxious to pass

the matter in silence, Miss Varnish actually questioned Mrs. Prudden, the housekeeper. She said—

"I am afraid, Mrs. Prudden, I may have neglected something which I ought to have done. Will you kindly put me right if I have? I should be sorry to be wanting to this sad occasion."

"I don't know, miss, but that you've done every mortal thing that you could have done; and I'm sure there's nothing undone which I can point out."

"Is there not? Oh, dear! I'm so relieved to hear you say so! But I really did fancy that the servants were annoyed at something. I'm sure I only wish them to speak, if *have* been careless in anything."

"Oh, dear! miss, indeed it's nothing which you could have helped. They all know that you've done your very best, miss."

"But what *is* the matter, Mrs. Prudden?" For that the housekeeper was anxious to cut the interview short was, from her manner, a thing beyond all doubt.

"Well, well, miss, I should say it's just—just nothing at all. Servants have their fancies, miss, you know; and this dreadfully sudden death has been such an upset to all of us. But there's none of them but says that you've been equal to the trial, and that master may be thankful he had you by him at the time. If you please, miss, I'm very anxious you should give me some directions about the luncheon on Tuesday, you know, miss. Can you let me know how many there are to be?"

A mystery there evidently was. But if it touched no secret of her own (and Mrs. Prudden's word might be taken for that), it need not, and should not, perplex Miss Varnish. So she followed in the housekeeper's diversion, and plunged into the arrangements entailed by the melancholy gathering of the following Tuesday.

One fear Miss Varnish did really succeed in driving out of her mind. She felt certain that Eva's pretensions to the *Campion* name were all baseless altogether. Endowed with such rank and prospects, she would never have received or maintained in favour such a lover as Murphy M'Quantigan. At any rate, she would not have gone away with him under circumstances which would ban her from good society for ever.

The Tuesday came; and the friends came. It was expected, from a letter received that morning by Gerald from his brother, that that brother would certainly be present at the funeral.

To enlarge the opportunity, the ceremony was postponed until the latest hour compatible with a sufficient remnant of daylight. They were to start for the church at four o'clock. A carriage was kept in waiting at Bridgewater all the day; but, much to the wonder of his brother and his niece, Mr. *Campion* did not come. It

was not to be easily accounted for; but the arrangements had been made, and the funeral must go on.

The company did not return from church until past five; and the luncheon that awaited them was somewhat in the nature of an anachronism. It was eaten, however, in full proportion. And it was between eight and nine in the evening before the house was cleared of the guests who had attended. Poor Mr. Campion had already retired; so also had Emily. Miss Varnish had enjoyed a little supper in her own room, wherein a fire had been lighted. She sat resting after the day's fatigues, reading a very enchanting novel. Hope now predominated in her above fear. Mr. Campion, only that morning, had said to her—

"My dear Miss Varnish, may you be fully rewarded for the comfort your excellent conduct has ministered to a sorrowing and broken-hearted man!"

And who so fitly the minister of that full reward as himself? Mrs. Prudden had half explained the mysterious demeanour of the servants by the presence of ghostly and nocturnal noises which had been heard, from time to time, since the night of the awful visitation. But now that the last honours had been so duly rendered, those noises would no longer have any pretence for existing, and cease they surely would. The servants of the house were to have their supper, and a few *convives* of their own station to eat it. For once in a way, the plate set out in the dining-room would remain there all the night; otherwise the servants' treat must be postponed to a most untoward hour. There was little thought of burglars at Deverington. Even that glass door, through which Mrs. Ferrier had followed Mr. M'Quantigan, was left frequently shutterless. Mr. Campion, an early riser, chose to have an exit which he could use without trouble. So stood matters below stairs on that night.

Apart from all this downstairs festivity, Miss Varnish sat by her comfortable fire over her book. She found it even more entertaining than she had expected. It was a story which it was difficult to lay down unfinished, and she continued reading on and on. The night advanced from hour to hour; the supper was over,

spite, or in consequence of her extreme terror, she uttered no sound of inquiry or alarm. The handle of the door was gently turned, and the door was partly opened, not so widely as to show who or what was behind it. Through the narrow chink between the door-post and the nearly-closed door came a hoarse, low whisper—

“Emma—Emma! Pray, Emma, are you there?”

Could she mistake the voice, though believing the speaker to have deserted her for ever?

“Who? What are you? How dare you come here?”

“Hus—h! They’re likely to be sound asleep to-night of all nights; but you’ll wake some of them, if you don’t take care. Are you all alone? And can I come in?”

And, presupposing an encouraging reply, the speaker pushed the door still further open. And there was revealed to view, embellished with a beard of the growth of several days, the face of Murphy M’Quantigan.

Miss Varnish was alarmed no longer, but intensely angry.

“How dare you insult me, sir? Go away—however you came—or I’ll alarm the house at once. I will! And if I ruin myself, your character won’t be mended by it. Go back to Miss March!”

“Hush! and do be a sensible girl. I’d very much like to know where to find Miss March, that I might just throttle her without any chloroform at all! Don’t talk of her, the murdering vixen! I want you.”

“How dare you tell me such lies? You took her away with you. How else could she have got away? Oh, you needn’t keep putting your finger up, to tell me to keep quiet. If I get into disgrace now, it shall be as your enemy, and not as your accomplice. Get away, before you drive me further!”

“Now, what d’ye mean by going and saying that I took the creature away? Why I haven’t stirred out of the house myself all the while!”

Emma thought of the mysterious noises which, ever since that night, had alarmed and impressed the servants, and she a little wavered in her unbelief; but she was not convinced.

“Perhaps, sir, you’ll tell me that Miss March is here too, all this while. Go to her, I say. You prefer your interests to mine. You left my very letter lying on the floor, to betray me;—the letter you must have got the morning you left Leamington.”

“Letter? I got no letter *that* day.—But I’ll tell you what—I now just see how it came about. That old hag, Mrs. Ferrier, got hold of the letter herself, and that’s what set her upon following me down here; and follow me she did, just in time to spoil all.”

During this conversation, the Irishman had slowly advanced into the room, and they were now close together.

"Oh, M'Quantigan! Now, do you expect me to believe all that? Mrs. Ferrier follow you down here, and into the house? Why, I was listening all the while!"

"Perhaps you were. If I hadn't been a fool, I should have been listening too." And then he narrated the sudden interruption and entire defeat of their infamous design. It was, in itself, improbable. But there was this important fact in its favour. It told against the narrator himself. It placed him in a light even more contemptible than atrocious. He had been frightened by one woman, and locked out by another. It was a story he would never have invented. Besides, it comforted Miss Varnish to believe it; and now she thoroughly did believe it; and, indeed, a thought, fully and fearfully corroborating the story, arose in her mind at that very instant.

"Murphy! Tell me—how did you manage to get out of that room?"

"Why, I found that, in the wall, there was a door which had been papered up. And when I thought it might be safe, I ripped up the paper with my knife;—managed to open the door, without any very great noise, and got into a small back passage, and then into a room——"

"Oh, yes. And so you frightened poor Mrs. Campion to death. Why did you do that?"

"I never went to do it. It was all an accident. I got myself first into the room where the maid-servant was. I found that I had awoken her; so I shuffled away, through the open door, into the next room. The poor lady opened her eyes and saw me;—most ladies are pleased with the sight of me, and like to look again. She screamed as if I'd been the Pope of Rome, and the screaming must have killed her. I took myself back to that closet; and since then I've been living, anyhow, in one of the spare rooms all the day, and up and down the house at nights, and I've been forced to live upon the scraps of the larder. To-night I've managed a little better."

"Oh, how dangerous! What could possess you to do so?"

"Sure, my dear creature, it would have been more dangerous than all to have ever gone out of the house. Why, how could I tell what those women would be up to next? And they'd never

night after night, to get a word with you ; but you always seemed asleep, before I could venture to come here ; and the servants didn't seem to sleep well at all."

"No, indeed—they heard you walking about ; you know how superstitious that kind of people are, and they've been living in mortal terror the whole week."

"Bless their mortal superstition, I say, with all my soul ! I rather thought that they'd be too much frightened ever to find me out. But it's been rather a dull week that I've passed. This night shall make up for it. I suppose you know that there's all the family plate, or the best of it, left out on the dining-room table?"

"The plate!—and you think—good heavens, Murphy ! You never can mean *that*?"

"Yes, but I do mean *that*. I intend to carry all that plate away with me, as a small remembrance of my visit at this house. Sure, they owe me some compensation ; it's so little attention they've paid me while I've been a guest."

"Murphy ! you shall not be so mad as to ruin yourself and me at the same time. You'd never escape. Mr. Campion would spend hundreds upon hundreds, or his brother would spend it for him, rather than submit to such a loss as that."

"Don't you set up to be wiser than your ancestors, Miss Emma, as I always say at our Protestant meetings. I know what's safe, and what's not safe. I've got that about me which would keep these Campion people from bothering me, if I were to take the very clothes they stand in."

"Murphy ! What can you mean ? You are insane, I am sure."

"My dear creature, you remember telling me that that poor unlucky lady who had the bad taste to be frightened to death at the looks of myself ; that she had something locked up in her drawers which she was desperately afraid of anybody else getting hold of. What you said came into my thoughts at the time ; so, several hours after the event, when the room was left all quiet and nobody likely to come in, I got hold of the poor lady's keys—they were close to the bed, and nobody had thought of taking them away ; and I just looked from drawer to drawer, to see if I could not find something worth finding. I did find something worth finding. I

another duty on hand now. Help me to pack the best of the plate, and one or two other things; and I'll be off at once. You shall share in the profit of it, if you'll only share the trouble."

"Murphy—Murphy! It may be safe enough for you; but it would ruin me."

"Stuff! Who's to think that *you've* had any hand in it? They'll suppose, of course, that some fellow contrived to come in, and secrete himself, while they were arranging the funeral. They know nothing here about what went on last Monday night. They can't hear us where we are now, I'm certain."

"No: but listen, Murphy. You say you are sure of making money by the paper you found in Mrs. Campion's drawer. If you are, why on earth should you run the risk—well, take the trouble, if you are even sure there is no risk—why should you take the trouble of robbing the house this night, as you propose to do?"

"I'll tell you why, Miss Emma: because I shan't be able to turn this paper into money just at once. It's not this Mr. Campion that I expect to pay me for it: it's the other, who, I overheard the servants say, was expected home to the funeral, and did not come. It's he to whom I shall take it, as soon as I can get hold of him; but, perhaps, he'll wait a little while to make sure it's no forgery, and I, all the while, shall be without my money. Of course, I mustn't let it go out of my hands—this paper, I mean—until he lets the money go into my hands. And all that fencing and contriving will take some time; though I know I shall manage all right in the end. But I shall be wanting money to go on with. I'm very hard up; and this is the only way of getting it just now. So now you quite understand my actions."

"No; hardly that. I don't understand why you choose to keep that paper for Mr. Herbert Campion. But you won't even tell me what it refers to?"

"I'll tell you a little of it: it's about the elder Mr. Campion's daughter."

"His daughter! What!—then has he a daughter, after all?"

"Ay; be you very sure that he has a daughter. You may just put away all your thoughts of ever settling down as mistress of this great house. They'll never come to anything. I can tell you, full sure."

In truth, unworthy of sympathy as this wretched woman may have been, her case was truly deplorable at this time. If she

verily nothing more than an impudent impostor, she had beheld her way clear to a life of prosperity and good behaviour in all her future.

And now, another revolution! Mr. M'Quantigan, selfish as he might really be, merited no reproach in this matter. But the Campion family secret had gathered itself, again, a dark cloud over her future fortunes. And—M'Quantigan again beside her, and with his seeming treachery explained away—the old influence was drawing her towards him once more. But she could not at once believe the gloomy prediction last uttered by him.

"Murphy, dear Murphy, why will you alarm me so? I cannot believe that that vile girl, Eva—that's her nonsensical name—Eva March they called her—I cannot believe that she has anything to do with the Campion family; or, indeed, with any respectable family anywhere."

"Can you not, indeed, Miss Varnish? Then I'll just tell you that there are others that can think so, and do think so. And I fancy they're right."

"Oh, I understand; you're her lover, and may marry her, if you like. Well: go to her this instant! Campion, or no Campion, she can't very well refuse you!"

"What are you talking of, Miss Varnish? It's ungrateful you are; blackguarding me in this way. You're just like those Papists at Limerick when I burnt an image of the Virgin, in front of the Popish chapel there, by way of showing them what idolators they were: they stoned me with stones, and would have made a martyr of me. And you're something like them. I give you a faithful warning, and you're angry."

"Angry! But, Murphy, you know you were in love with her. It's no manner of use your denying it. I saw a letter written by her aunt, a Mrs. Dowlas; and she said everybody was talking how you went on with Miss Roberts. That, it seems, was Miss March's Carnarvonshire name. And, I daresay, the hussey has an alias for every county up and down the kingdom!"

"You think yourself exceedingly wise, Miss Varnish! You're wrong altogether about that girl. It's no use bothering myself about explaining this and that, when we've other affairs on hand. Only, I tell you it was never any such thing. But I will let you know what makes me sure that Miss March is the real and true Miss Campion. That deceitful old creature, Mrs. Ferrier, with whom I scraped acquaintance at Leamington, you know,—she promised me four hundred pounds if I'd put Miss March out of the way. You may wonder; but it's true. Mrs. Ferrier's son was mad upon marrying the girl, it seems; and his mother was crazy herself at the thought of it. Well, as I've told you already,

she came tearing down here, after all ; and stopped me, just at the time. Now, what should make her so very different all of a sudden ? Why, it's as clear as the nose on one's countenance. She must have suddenly found out that Miss March (to call her so) was no such outcast as she imagined her ; that, instead of being a low, bad match for her son, she'd be as good a one as any nobleman need find. I heard her praying the girl to forgive her, and begging her to treat her as a friend, and go along with her. And they went away all loving and friendly, I'm aware. Now, putting this and other things together, I'm certain that the world will hear of her soon as Miss Campion. And—and then, you see, she'd have a better right to be here than any which your Mr. Campion could give you."

"Indeed, I fear it's only all too true. But, Murphy, I have more than once considered your interest rather than my own. Will you not think a little of me now ? Why should you use that paper against me, when you might use it for me ?"

"Tear it up, or burn it, you mean ? Can't possibly afford such a waste, my dear. From what you tell me of this Mr. Gerald of your's, I don't fancy he'd pay us a farthing to hush the matter up ; and, if he would, the matter has gone a great deal too far to be hushed up. That lost Miss Campion will come forward and get her father to turn his brother out of this house, even if I were to burn that paper at this very minute."

"Then, Murphy, what earthly good can it do you with the girl's father, Mr. Campion's brother ? It can only confirm what he knows—on your showing—to be true already."

"I don't say, my good girl, that the paper's wanted to make *him* the more certain of it. But I've heard you say the property is the elder Mr. Campion's, and is entailed ?"

"Yes, that I am certain is the case."

"Very well. Now, as long as that Mr. Herbert is alive, of course if he chooses to consider the girl his daughter, he can keep her here, and allow her what he thinks proper. But, unless he would have her deprived of the estate after his death—unless he

“But, Murphy, it’s really too dangerous ; it may be all very well to say that, with the paper you’ve got, you can make your terms with the family. But just only consider ; it’ll all be found out here, and inquiry be made, before you can communicate with Mr. Campion’s brother ; and however he might afterwards wish to keep you harmless, you know he cannot do it, if the matter is once in the hands of the authorities.”

“Trust me for managing all right. I’ll tell you how it’s to be done. I’ve planned every step beforehand, while I’ve been hiding in this house. I can lay my hands on some hampers in which we can pack up several things very nicely. When that’s all done, I know the way to the stables. I’ve watched out of a garret, and seen that there’s no dog near them, and that I can lay my hands on a horse and dog-cart very easily. I shall drive to the Bridge-water station, to be off by the train that starts for London at six. They’ll hardly find it out before then. I shall manage all well at the station ; put up the dog-cart at an inn, say I’m the confectioner’s man from Bristol, who served the luncheon at Mrs. Campion’s funeral, going back with the empty hampers ; the plate I shall put by little and little in each one ; take a fly from the inn to the station ; be at Bristol before I’m likely to be pursued. Once there, I shall know where to go ; spend a day there ; transform myself into something very different from what I look now, and wait to communicate with Mr. Campion ;—there, then !”

Miss Varnish considered how threatening—hopeless, indeed—her position had become. If Mr. Gerald Campion were deprived of what he only held on sufferance—Deverington Hall—he might be worth marrying still. But what so likely as that his newly-found niece should interfere, and, with Mrs. Ferrier to back her, should assure her uncle that, in marrying Miss Varnish, he would commit his happiness to very unsafe keeping ? Miss Varnish felt that from the Campion family she had quite as much to fear as to hope, things having gone so awry ; and she spoke to her friend accordingly.

“Murphy, if you’ll let me go with you, I’ll assist you all I can.”

“Let you go with me ? That’ll make it rather awkward.”

“Not if you really manage as you say you are sure of doing, Murphy. I will not stay here and run such a risk. Unless you take me with you, you shall not go. You needn’t think to frighten me ! If we both go to prison together, it’ll be much worse for you than for me. I mightn’t find my life in jail a very pleasant one, but at least, once there, I should know the worst, and shouldn’t be living in the constant dread in which I must live here ; and I daresay I should interest some charitable person in me, and that something would be found for me when my time was expired. It’s

more than I may get by remaining here. So, Murphy, you shall not make a cat's-paw of me altogether; shall I go with you, or shall I alarm the house at once, be the consequences what they may to either of us—to both of us?"

"Well, well! you shall do as you like, only let us get to work. There are some nick-nacks in the drawing-room which I cannot find it in my heart to leave behind, and I know they're valuable ones. We'll go there first." And to the drawing-room they adjourned. Like the dining-room, it was upon the ground floor of the house, and what with caution and carpets, there was really no great likelihood of their being overheard. Mr. M'Quantigan, divesting his feet of their shoes, went up into a garret, and fetched a few of the hampers he had seen stowed away. The supper of the night before was a guarantee that, amongst the servants up there, slumber would press rather heavily.

Miss Varnish lighted up the drawing-room. They made a choice of the most valuable things,—rich, rare vases of Sevres, ivory pagodas, and boxes carved out of agate and amethyst. But it occurred simultaneously to both of them, that they would be exposed alike to the danger of damage and of discovery, did they not find some soft material in which to wrap these articles.

After a minute's consideration, the Orangeman suggested that they should unrip some feather beds, and make use of the feathers inside. It was important to run no risk of detection in obtaining one; and that on which poor Mrs. Campion had been wont to lie appeared the safest—as to getting hold of it. So Mr. M'Quantigan paid one more visit to the chamber in which his evil presence had been the herald of death, and dragged away the bed on which the unhappy lady had taken the last rest permitted her on earth. Her daughter, Emily, occupied the room that Miss March had tenanted; so that was not available. M'Quantigan brought the bed into the drawing-room.

"When we go into the dining-room," he said, "you must get me something to drink. This is heavy work. Now, then! what's

“Stay here,” said Murphy, “while I go round to the stables, and get the horse and dog-cart. It’ll take me a little while, as I must put some straw on the stable-yard. I know where to find it.”

“Do you mean to bring the carriage to this door.”

“No: not for any money! I shall drive out at the back way. I know the bearings of the premises pretty well; but I shall give another another good look at them now. When I’ve got all ready for driving off, we’ll carry these things there one by one, and then get in. It’s almost four now. We’ve plenty of time, but not very much to spare.”

“Shall I go with you to the stables?”

“No; you’d better stay here. I know the way round very well; it’s not very likely that anybody will come near us; if you do hear any one, close this door as gently as you can, and make good your retreat upstairs. I shall know, if I see the door shut when I come back, that it isn’t safe to go in. And we must trust to— to Providence to appoint what we are to do next.”

He went away, and left her by the open door. The day had scarcely broken. A fresh, cool breeze was blowing over the garden, and sporting with the leaves which were everywhere whirling off the trees. But the waning moon was far above the horizon, and their way would not be traversed in darkness. Miss Varnish had taken from her own room all she needed. She was dressed for the journey, and she carried a little bag in her hand.

Very anxiously and fearfully she awaited her companion’s return, and listened for any threatening sounds which might proceed from the upper portion of the house. Nothing justified her fears in that direction; and in less than a quarter of an hour her accomplice returned. He had accomplished all he intended by going. The yard was laid with straw, the horse and carriage ready to start, and the gates intervening between the yard and the road were thrown open, ready beforehand. There were four hampers awaiting removal. He took up the one which contained the most valuable articles of plate, and carried it on his shoulders away. She remained at the door, prepared to follow, as soon as ever he placed the fourth upon his back. Within a minute or two after conveying away the first he returned to fetch the second. It was the largest of the four, and on getting it outside the door, he laid it upon the step in order to place it in an easier and securer position. The lady, at his desire, bent down to assist him.

There was a sound of footsteps upon the gravel-walk outside; there was a flash of light suddenly shining upon them, which was neither of the moon nor of the stars; and while Mr. M’Quantigan darted away towards the stables, and left his hamper behind him,

Miss Varnish, startled out of all knowledge (at the moment) what to do, found herself standing face to face with Mr. Herbert Campion.

"What! Miss Varnish! Is it possible? Madam, this really will require some explanation."

"Oh, I'm—I'm so much alarmed, Mr. Campion! I thought I heard a noise in the house,—and I got up to look; and——"

"And you dressed yourself and took a bag in your hand, madam, to assist you in searching the house; instead of alarming the servants, or my brother!"

"Oh, I was so frightened—so confused; I didn't know what I did."

"Madam, I saw when I got to the lodge that something appeared to be going on that ought not; and I told Johnson to follow me with the light. Johnson, ring the door-bell. Madam, you must not leave the house until further inquiry. Johnson, take in that hamper. Madam, I heard you speaking to that man who ran away, as you would never have spoken to a common thief who was unknown to you. I insist upon your remaining here, until this strange affair can be examined into."

The hamper was replaced in the hall; the bell was rung, and the house awakened, and the wretched Emma retreated upstairs, to seek safety and secrecy, at least for a while, in the crowning peril now fallen upon her.

Herbert Campion was very soon greeted by his brother Gerald; and the latter was quickly and entirely put in possession of the unaccountable wickedness of that Miss Varnish, whom he had been disposed to value and to reward so highly. Mr. Campion explained that he had fully intended honouring his sister-in-law's funeral, but that he had been intercepted in London by a visit of a most important and startling character. Two gentlemen,—a Mr. Dyk-hart, of whom he had heard his wife speak in former days; and a Mr. Ballow, of whom he had heard in a very different way,—had waited upon him, with assurances, which were certainly supported by much seeming evidence, that the daughter he had discarded was his own child, after all. Yet, after his wife's own confession, however could he believe it?

They were talking together, he and his brother, in the dressing-room of the latter, in which a fire had been lighted; for the household was wide awake enough now

modest fortune. But, I confess I don't see how the terrible proofs you had are all to be set aside.”

“Nor, indeed, do I. You may remember, at that miserable time, fourteen or fifteen years ago, that I thought I saw one thing which contradicted that woman Roberts's story. She said she parted with her child on the day of its birth, in March 1838. Now, the child I was taught to consider mine, was spoken of as born in March, 1839—just a year later. But, unaccountable as that seemed, I thought it was made only too easy to believe. The little girl, whom it nearly broke my heart to surrender, even when I was made sure she was not my own, she was, in appearance, a year above her nominal age; and Mrs. Roberts let me know that her child was remarkably small and weak when born. And Lady Anne Somerby mentioned to me—she was fond of putting all sorts of trivial detail into her letters—what interest, during the spring and summer of 1838, my wife was taking in a child only at nurse in Hammersmith. In very truth, I had a choice of improbabilities; and my wife's guilt, in which I would have disbelieved, while a thread of hope remained, seemed the less—alas! the less—improbable of the two. But setting aside all that, you know that I had her confession—her confession with her own lips, and in your and my own presence.”

While the brothers were discoursing still after this fashion, a servant came hastily in, to say that Miss Varnish had been seen gliding across the Italian garden, and in the direction of the wood that skirted the road to Bridgewater.

ALEXANDER SMITH

It is the morning of the 5th of January, 1867. The wintry sea comes wildly up the Firth of Forth, and, with a dull thunder, tumbles on the shores. All along the dim, misty coast, it runs moaning at the harbour-bars, and shakes the tottering piers, and leaps like an angry and disappointed lion upon the passing steamers. Through the chilly wintry air the opposite shores of Fifeshire peer shiveringly. Not far behind there uprise the tall church-steeple of Edinburgh; and above them Arthur's lion crouches ominously.

The snow has fallen, and out of doors everything is very cold and cheerless. In the dull glow of the sun, the frost-diamonded panes and the snow-laden roofs shine with a bewildering whiteness. All around these, when the spring-time has come, and the happy birds have begun to build, the air is filled with the fragrance of blossoming currant-bushes. In retired nooks are found violets and primroses; and in the little gardens bolder flowers flaunt. Chestnut-tree-shaded are the lanes, and there, when the day is drawing to a close, youths and maidens sing snatches of olden ballads. But on this chilly January day the snow lies deep in the gardens, and underneath the trees; and there is scarcely a sound heard, save the strange language of the sea, breaking over the rocks beyond.

Surrounded by those who love him, a dying man lies in a chamber not far from where the sea is moaning. Than he, none have more delighted in listening to the great ballads it was ever singing; and for hours he had sat looking at the sleek, smooth snow. The flowers, too, he loved well; and as he walked through the woods and meadows, he would bend and reverently pluck them. With all these he had for years held communion, and they had told him some of the great secrets of the glorious world; and through the influence they had exerted over him, had he been upheld when his days were dark and dreary. But now, the flowers sleeping underneath the snow he regarded not; and the moaning of the great sea was by him unheard. Alexander Smith was dead.

While yet the shadow of his loss hangs so drearily around those who loved him, it is surely no time to speak unfeelingly, or to be harshly critical, in glancing at those works he has left us as the results of a long-continued literary activity. A true and honest gentleman, "who only feared a lie" and the speaker of it, let us endeavour to touch with a gentle and loving hand all those circumstances of his life, and those mementoes of his genius, which

may recal fond recollections to the hearts of those who have long yearned to him, and, it may be, inspire some respect for his memory in the minds of those who have, as yet, been strangers to his name.

He was born at Kilmarnock, on the 31st of December, 1830; when he died he was thirty-six years of age, and he had been known to the reading world for about thirteen years. Originally intended by his parents for the ministry, circumstances compelled them to lay aside their plans; and at an early age he was placed in a Glasgow warehouse, where he remained for years, designing patterns for the calico printers. Now it was that he found he was possessed of other talents besides those which were considered necessary to qualify him for the ministry. He began versifying, and the habit crept upon him, and relieved the tediousness of his labour. He was probably not more than twenty or twenty-one when he finished the poem afterwards given to the world under the title of "A Life Drama." Feeling within himself that it had claims to greater publicity than that afforded by the small circle of friends to whom he read it, he took the liberty of submitting the MS. to the Rev. George Gilfillan, then, as now, a critic of high repute in Scotland and elsewhere. Mr. Gilfillan, struck with the daring imagery contained in it, strongly advised its publication. Part of it appeared shortly afterwards in the *Leader* newspaper, edited by Mr. G. H. Lewes; then the whole of it was published in the *Critic*, from which it was subsequently reprinted, and published, together with a few minor poems, under the title of "Poems, by Alexander Smith."

Instances of men waking and finding themselves famous, are not few; but not many men of our time have been so suddenly overwhelmed by fame as was Mr. Smith immediately upon the appearance of his volume. With the public, it had an immediate and long-continued sale; and as it afforded to the critics no mean scope for any amount of favourable or adverse opinions, it was not lost sight of by them. Instantly the old battle of Scotland against the metropolis appeared to have been revived, and for a long time the literary sky was darkened by rumours of critical encounters on poor Mr. Smith's book. On the one hand, it was almost universally admitted, by the opposite side, that the principal poem displayed some amount of ability to write blank verse, according to the general laws governing such compositions; but it was urged that the imagery was overdrawn to a most pitiable and absurd extent; that the poem lacked originality, both in style and in matter, many parts being the merest echoes of what our greatest masters of composition had written; that anything at all "pretty" about it was marred by perplexing and pedantic mannerisms; that it was an ill-

jointed and defective narrative, and possessed few claims to be considered a poem. Veering round, Mr. Smith's supporters, headed by Mr. Gilfillan, who had, he said, a paternal interest in the poet, quickly closed with this array of objections. Seizing hold of the most truthful one, they did not deny that there were some slight grounds on which to found a charge of non-originality, so far as a few passages were concerned; but they argued, with great force and acumen, that there was much more originality in conception and development than might reasonably have been expected from so young and inexperienced an author, fresh from the perusal of contemporary works. And it was further contested, and stoutly supported, that the other charges were the usual bugbears held out by critics, whose custom it was to seize hold of any new writer who might happen to make a noise in the world, with a view of rendering him obedient to their dictates.

There is little doubt that those who upheld "A Life Drama" often forgot, in the heat of their arguments, to admit numerous defects which in their calmer moments they would never desire to defend. Amongst the great variety of opinions expressed, there are few which agree, and very few which are correct. It was undoubtedly overstepping the boundary-line of honest reviewing to call an author a plagiarist because the greater part of his images happened to be drawn from those objects to which the eye of man is most accustomed—such as the sea, the tree, the sun, the moon, and the stars. Mr. Smith himself seems to have been keenly aware of this, and takes occasion to remark thereon, towards the close of the first volume of "A Summer in Skye," in introducing the reader to certain poems, written when he was imprisoned by rain in a Skye farm-house:—"The competent critic," he observes "will see at a glance that they are the vilest plagiarisms; that as throughout I have called the sky 'blue,' and the grass 'green,' I have stolen from every English poet from Chaucer downwards; he will observe also, from occasional use of 'all' and 'and,' that they are the merest Tennysonian echoes." The touch of cool satire contained in this extract will be apparent. During the time his book was

dispensed with many explanatory passages. The characters of the drama are few, the principal one being Walter, a young and fame-seeking poet, who, in the opening scene, is discovered in an antique room at midnight, reading some impassioned lines from a MS. he has just written. The secondary characters are, a lady whom the poet meets one summer day in the woods, and who dies shortly after he has begun to love her; and Violet, another lady, through whose gentle and womanly influence he is led to heights of nobleness and wisdom, after disappointed ambition and unfulfilled hopes have made him have little faith in man, and still less in God. A few other characters, not of much importance to the story, are also introduced. The plot is simple, perhaps old and barren. Mainly it purports to show some parts of the inner life of a daring poet, thirsting for fame and love; how, at first, he cannot see through the mysteries of human longings, human sufferings, and human regrets; and how, at last, he passes through these ordeals, and emerges nobler and "whiter-souled." The poem is written in blank verse, several stanzas and songs being introduced in the course of it. It betokens careful writing, a knowledge of the laws of metre and rhyme, and a delicate appreciation of melody. Perhaps it is unequal in many parts, if so, the finer passages lose nothing by contrast. Taken as a whole, it is by no means an unfinished work.

Here is some of the blank verse melody. Walter and a friend are walking by the sea:

"The rosy glow has faded from the sky,
The rosy glow has faded from the sea.
A tender sadness drops upon my soul,
Like the soft twilight dropping on the world."

Of the rhyming portions, the following is by no means the best; but it goes far enough for our purpose:

"We loosed the gate and wandered in,
When the sun eternal
Was sudden blanched with amethyst,
As if a thick and purple mist
Dusked his brows supernal.
Soon like a god in mortal throes,
City, hill, and sea, he dips
In the death-hues of eclipse;
Mightier his anguish grows,
'Till he hung back with ring intense,
The wreck of his magnificence."

"I turned and asked her of the Child.
'She is gone hence,' quoth she,
'To be with Christ in Paradise.
Oh, Sir! I stilled her infant cries,
I nursed her on my knee.'"

The next quotation we shall give has a strong, sturdy sound with it. It is like a mighty wind rushing through a forest of beautiful palms. Whether it showed promise of future poetical splendour, let the reader judge :

"A grim old king,
Whose blood leapt madly when the trumpet brayed,
To joyous battle 'mid a storm of steeds,
Won a rich kingdom on a battle day ;
But in the sunset he was ebbing fast,
Ringed by his weeping lords. His left hand held
His white steed to the belly splashed with blood,
That seemed to mourn him with its drooping head ;
His right, his broken brand ; and in his ears
His old victorious banners flap the winds.
He 'called his faithful herald to his side,
'Go ! tell the dead I come !' With a proud smile.
The warrior with a stab let out his soul,
Which fled and shrieked through all the other world,
'Ye dead ! My Master comes !' And there was pause
Till the great shade should enter."

Here and there, in the course of the poem, we meet with passages of wondrous richness. Here is one. The lady has just discovered the sleeping poet in the wood. She speaks :

"An opulent soul
Dropt in my path like a great cup of gold,
All rich and rough with stories of the gods."

Further on we read :

"The passion-panting sea
Watches the unveiled beauty t stars
Like a great hungry soul."

And again :

"If thy rich heart is like a palace shattered,
Stand up amid the ruins of thy heart
And with a calm brow front the solemn stars."

Carefully noting the opinions passed upon his "Life Drama," Mr. Smith began to write something which he thought would afford less grounds for adverse opinions. In two years he issued, in conjunction with Mr. Sydney Dobell, a small volume entitled "Sonnets on the War ;" but it was not until 1857 that he made any effectual efforts to convince his critics that he was a true poet. He then published under the title of "City Poems," some half dozen compositions of much merit. Therein does he glorify with song the heart of the great city ; singing of the ebb and flow of human existence ; of the strange throbbings of the streets ; of the loveliness of moonlit squares ; of the open parks and the merry laughter of girls ; also of his own hopes and fears ; of the inexpressible deliciousness of country life :

"To a new spirit o'er which tyrannised,
Like a musician o'er an instrument,
The sights and sounds of the majestic world ;

ALEXANDER SMITH

of the strange freshness of sea-breezes ; of the glorious sea beyond, with the sunlight creeping sweetly along it, like happy thoughts around the heart. Somewhat of the same texture as the "Life Drama," they contain considerably more of what is really poetical, are characterised by earnest thought, are full of human interest, and are very free from fanciful exaggerations. The longest poem in the book is one entitled "A Boy's Poem;" and an analysis of that composition will give a fair estimate of the rest.

The poem is wonderfully subjective, probably the most subjective of Mr. Smith's writings ; and therein lies, we think, no small portion of its charm. In dealing with his own experience a young author does well : for he cannot be supposed to be intuitively possessed of sufficient knowledge of emotions which he has not undergone ; and by confining himself to such themes as those about which he is well-informed, he will be almost certain to find readers who can appreciate him, because they will feel with him. Objectiveness, especially in poetry, is doubtless a considerable acquirement, but it is one of those acquirements which it is somewhat unsafe to wish for, until discretion has taught an author how to use it. It is, perhaps, better, in the end, that writers should say too much about what they know, than too much about what they do not know.

This subjective poem is the story of the early years in a boy's life. It opens at a period when he is very young, but old enough to observe that there is a strange silence in the house where his dead father lay. Growing up, family circumstances necessitate him being put to the acquisition of money ; and, accordingly, while he is yet young, he

" Was led
Into a square of warehouses and left
Among faces merciless as engine wheels."

A few bitter years passed, and then calmer and happier days seemed to be coming ; for

" Love oped the dusky volume of my life,
And wrote with his own hot and hurrying hand,
A chapter in fierce splendour."

"I left her light,
As happy as a serf who leaves his king
Ennobled, and possessed of broader lands,
Than the great rain-cloud, trailing from the fens,
Can blacken with his shadow."

Then follows an account of the holiday, made more pleasurable by thinking of her who is thinking of him. In an ecstasy of delight, he sings :

"When first I saw your tender face,
Saw you, loved you from afar,
My soul was like forlornest space
Made sudden happy by a star.
I heard the lark go up to meet the dawn,
The sun is sinking in the splendid sea;
Through this long day hast thou had one, but one
Poor thought of me !

"O happiest of isles !
In every garden blows
The large voluptuous-bosomed rose
For musky miles and miles.
I wander round this garden coast ;
I see the glad blue water run ;
In the light of thy beauty I am lost,
As the lark is lost in the sun."

And then we come back to the great city again. Pausing upon the staircase of the warehouse, he overhears two girls in conversation. One of them concludes with—

"She said she meant
To dress her head with living flowers ;—what fun
To use the roses, by one lover brought,
To turn the other's brain !"

He has heard enough :

"Hope's door closed with a clang ; I rose up calm—
Calm as a country when the storm is o'er,
And broken boughs are hanging from the trees,
And swollen streams have crept within their banks,
Leaving a mighty marge of wreck and sand
Along the soppy fields."

Weary of love, he endeavours to find in the country scenes around him some sort of sympathetic feeling for him in his misery. He has just partially succeeded in doing this, when, upon a cruel dawn, he wakes early, and finds that his mother is dead. And so the story somewhat abruptly ends.

The petty warfare among the critics, which had again been commenced by the publication of "City Poems," had just ceased, when it was once more revived by the appearance of "Edwin of Deira." Edwin, as most schoolboys know, was a famous prince of the Saxon Heptarchy, who ruled over Deira, and whose reign was characterised by much that is commendable. It was very unfortunate for Mr. Smith that his book was published after "The

Idylls of the King ;" for it is easily laid him open to a charge of gross imitation. This charge was, of course, at once made, and for a long time upheld, but with little show of reason. It is one of the absurdities of modern criticism to presume, that because a great author has thought fit to glean from an ancient chronicle materials for his poems, that no other writer has a right to search the said voluminous chronicle for the same purpose. But it so happens that the sources of Mr. Tennyson's and Mr. Smith's poems are entirely different. Without doubt, the incidents upon which the "Idylls" are founded are recorded in "The History of Prince Arthur"—the events referred to in the poems forming somewhere about a hundredth part of that work. Bede's "Ecclesiastical History" has evidently afforded material for Mr. Smith. Moreover, the greater part of the poem was written long before the "Idylls" were announced.

"Edwin of Deira" is a story full of martial music—the glimmer of spears—the far-sounding ring of sword and shield—the tramp of great armies—hunting—love-making. In this great world of action there are little sylvan nooks of homely life ; and the reader, as he passes along, comes suddenly upon them, and looks at them lovingly. In relating all the bitterness and sweetness of the story, the author has endeavoured to lose his individuality as best he can—with what result the following passages will attest :

"—a ravine that broke down from the hill
With many a tumbled crag ; a streamlet leapt
From stony shelf to shelf, the rocks were touched
By purple fox-gloves, plumed by many a fern ;
And all the soft green bottom of the gorge
Was strewn with hermit stones that sideways bend,
Smooth-cheeked with emerald moss."

"In at the door a moment peeped a girl,
Fair as a rose-tree growing thwart a gap
Of ruin, seen against the blue when one
Is dipped in dungeon gloom ; and Redwald called,
And at the call she through the chamber came,
And laid a golden head and blushing cheek
Against his breast. He clasped his withered hands
Fondly upon her head, and bent it back,
As one might bend a downward-looking flower,
To make its perfect beauty visible,
Then kissed her mouth and cheek."

"Around a crag.
That with its gloomy pines o'er hung the vale,
Swept hunt and hunter out of sight and sound.
They were alone, and in the sudden calm,
When round them came the murmur of the woods
Upon a sweeping sigh of summer wind—
O, moment dying ere a cymbal's clash !
O memory enough to sweeten death !

The unexpected solitude surprised
 His heart to utterance, and the princess sat
 Blinded and crimson as the opening rose
 That feels yet sees not day. Then, while the wind
 To his quick heart grew still, and every leaf
 Was wakeful ear and eye, he pressed his lips
 Upon the fairest hand in all the world
 Once."

"She heard, and all untouched by virgin shame,
 False and unworthy then, erect she stood
 Before her father and her brethren seven,
 Pale as her robe, and in her cloudless eyes
 Love, to which death and time are vapoury veils
 That hide not other worlds, and stretched a hand,
 Which Edwin held, and kissed before them all
 In passionate reverence; smitten dumb by thanks
 And noble shame of his unworthiness,
 And sense of happiness o'erdue. And while
 The prince's lips still lingered on the hand
 That never more could pluck a simple flower,
 But he was somehow mixed up in the act,
 She faltered like a lark beneath the sun
 Poised on the summit of its airy flight,
 And, sinking to a lower beautiful range
 Of tears and maiden blushes, sought the arms
 That sheltered her from childhood, and hid there,
 Shaken by happy sobs."

"Edwin of Deira" was the last poem published by Mr. Smith in book form. But he wrote prose, and the prose he wrote was not the mere prose of an ordinary writer. He was a voluminous essayist, but neither an idle chatterbox nor a conceited pedant. He points his moral thoughtfully and earnestly; sometimes, perhaps, he is desultory—pleasantly so. Like his own model essayist, Montaigne, he dallies with you gracefully, growing pleasantly garrulous over seemingly unimportant matters; and then, throwing away this loose and cumbersome attire, charges at you with vigour and sound reason, until you are fain to confess you are conquered. And, more than this, he has instilled into his prose the essence of his poetry. It is, indeed, often difficult to tell which is the most poetical. You take up his "Summer in Skye," and, beginning at Chapter I., read: "Summer has leaped suddenly on Edinburgh, like a tiger. The air is still and hot; but, every now and then, a breath of east wind startles you through the warm sunshine—like a sudden sarcasm felt through a strain of flattery."

You presume that the book is simply about travels—a guide-book; but it is neither travels, criticism, poetry, history. It is *all of them*. Would you like to know how charmingly they are blended?—read the volumes.

The poetry of his prose is always-appearing when you least

expect it. Every page seems like the blushing cheek of a maiden. About his essays, little more can be said. Out in the sunny country, in the pleasant month of May, you will see that, here and there, the hedgerows are breaking forth into blossom; and just so do the beauties of his prose-poetry burst upon you—not so much as to overwhelm you with a sense of deliciousness, but enough to tinge everything with a wonderful delightfulness. Three years ago appeared “*Dreamthorp: a Book of Essays, written in the country.*” Let us direct your attention to some slight extracts from the book:

“The village stands far inland, and the streams that trot through the soft green valley, all about, have as little knowledge of the sea as the three-years’ child of the storms and passions of mankind.”

“Summer, with its daisies, runs up to every cottage-door. From the little height where I am now sitting, I see it beneath me. Nothing could be more peaceful. The wind and the birds fly over it. A passing sunbeam makes brilliant a white gable-end, and brings out the colours of the blossomed apple-tree beyond, and disappears. I see figures in the street, but hear them not. The hands on the church-clock seem always pointing to one hour. Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine. I make a frame of my fingers, and look at my picture. On the walls of the next Academy’s exhibition will hang nothing half so beautiful!”

“There is a certain want of ease about the old writers which has an irresistible charm. The language flows like a stream over a pebbled bed, with propulsion, eddy, and sweet recoil—the pebbles, if retarding movement, giving ring and dimple to the surface, and breaking the whole into babbling music.”

These essays were written not in the flush of poetical fame, but after some struggles with the world, some little success, and a fair share of happiness, had tempered his life, and made him into a sober-minded, thoughtful man, with homely joys and sorrows. The captious critic will see that he can easily found some sort of censure upon them—the thoughtful reader will find them agreeable and instructive.

Mr. Smith has also written a novel, called “*Alfred Hagart’s Household.*” It is a Scotch story, and it is said to be true to the life. Many readers will not fail to observe in it some shadowy autobiographical sketches. Could he ever have “gone out of himself,” and have been so successful as he has been? We think not. He held no pretentious views upon questions outside his own little world; but what he did see clearly, he enforced as best he could.

Those who have examined our periodical literature for the last few years, know that the books already issued contain, by no

means, everything Alexander Smith has written. He was a hard-working and constant contributor to many of the best magazines. In an article on Mr. Carlyle at Edinburgh he concludes thus: "He has been to me only a voice, sometimes sad, sometimes wrathful, sometimes scornful; and when I saw him for the first time, with the eye of flesh, stand up amongst us the other day, and heard him speak kindly, brotherly affectionate words, his first appearance of that kind, I suppose, since he discoursed of 'Heroes and Hero-Worship' to the London people, I am not ashamed to confess that I felt moved towards him, as I do not think, in any possible combination of circumstances, I could have felt moved towards any other living man."

Thus it ever was in all the transactions of his life. Like a little child, looking up to his father, so he looked up to those whom he held to be the fathers and master-spirits of the Age of Thought; and had he lived longer, he would have been quite content to have followed in the footsteps of such men as Thomas Carlyle. As it is, his name will not be handed down to posterity as that of a great poet, novelist, or essayist; but that he has written beautiful and noble poetry, exquisite fiction, and excellent essays, no critic of English literature will venture to deny.

JOSEPH M. HAWCROFT.

LIFE IN A NORTH-GERMAN CHATEAU

BY THE COUNTESS VON LAUENBRÜCK

CHAPTER X.

THE following day we all drove over to Baron P——'s. Fritz, mounting the box, with an air of philosophy, gathered up the ribbons in a masterly manner, edifying to contemplate (with yesterday's experiences fresh in one's memory). Count Lauenbrück drove his wife and cousin, Herr von Lützow; whilst Count Karl, Hilda, and I, settled ourselves comfortably in the drag to which Fritz had harnessed his bays. Our way lay through a pretty undulating country, smiling with peace and plenty: the afternoon was bright and warm, but not unpleasantly so, and Count Karl made himself especially agreeable; so that we were surprised when a sudden turn announced that we were entering the baron's domains, and in a moment more we were sweeping in gallant style round the Rondelle. At the sound of the carriage-wheels the baron came out to meet us, and welcomed the whole party with a cheerful cordiality of manner that sat well upon him.

"Come, Fritz," he cried, as, after we had all descended from our seats, our Jehu still sat immovably glued to his.

"Thank you, Herr Baron; but I dare not leave my bays."

"Hand the reins over to the groom."

"And my new drag to unconditional destruction. 'No, no!'"

"The animals don't look so dangerous."

"Their looks belie them."

"But you cannot sit on your box until ten o'clock this evening."

No; I am going to take them round by B—— for a little exercise."

"And eternally to offend me."

"Your excellency is not so implacable."

"Make no such rash assertions."

"Then I will throw myself on your mercy!"

"Ah! that is another thing; but what will my wife say?"

There was a twinkle in the baron's eye as he said this, which convinced me that Fritz's delinquences had been duly communicated to him, and had probably lost nothing in the telling.

"Present my *hommages* to the Frau Baronin," answered Fritz, his face a tinge rosier than its wont; "and say I rely on her acknowledged amiability for excusing me!"

"Well hit, *my Jove!*" whispered Count Karl in my ear, as, tickling up his bays, and looking very much like business, Fritz

drove triumphantly away from the perron where we were standing. Our courtly host, turning to us, begged we would do him the honour of following him to his wife's apartments.

Here we found the elder ladies sipping coffee, and, after a few minutes conversation, the whole party proceeded to the garden, which was prettily laid out, abounding, after German fashion, in summer-houses, arbours, pavilions, and hermitages. There was also a bowling-green; and, a little to the right of this establishment, a pretty verdant enclosure, too large for a paddock, and planted with so much taste that it might almost have been called a park, wherein a herd of black and white goats were browsing, some of which came up on Baron P——'s approach, and nibbled at the bread and sugar which he took out of his pockets. Here we remained some time; and as the ladies had brought their work with them, and the gentlemen found solace in their cigars, we were all tolerably contented. For myself, I found pleasure enough in looking at the baroness's face, which, seen in all the glare of a July afternoon sun, was quite as exquisite as I had imagined it to be in the shady drawing-rooms of Lauenbrück. About seven o'clock a servant summoned us to tea. The house, which was only two stories high, was roomy and comfortable in the extreme. A number of sitting-rooms *en suite* on the ground-floor led us to the hall, which, hung round with stags-heads and antlers, ems'-beards, horns, guns, whips, and rods, testified to the young baron's love of sport. The rooms were furnished uniformly with dark oak or walnut-wood furniture, and abounded in carved rococo *armoires* and cabinets, inlaid with ivory, mother-o'-pearl, and different coloured woods. The walls were hung with family pictures. In the last room of the suite, which had been Baron Oscar's special sanctum, all was as he left it,—a silver inkstand and letter-weights, an open letter on the writing-table, his cap and gloves lying on an old cabinet, a coat hanging on some antlers. Over the sofa hung an oil-painting of the young baron himself, life-size, in a green hunting-suit, the chesnut curls waving over the open brow, and a cheery light in the honest brown eyes.

The tea-table, set out with a variety of cold meats, preserves.

Thus the days followed, and, on the whole, much resembled each other. My morning drives to B——, and refreshing sea-baths, were doing me good, and I thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon or evening walks. Our party was large enough to redeem it from dullness, and as liberty reigned supreme at Lauenbrück, each one was free to choose his own amusements and occupation. Nothing pleased Count Lauenbrück more than driving about his property, showing me his farms, chatting with the farmers respecting the improvements, and discussing the harvest prospects. There were ten large farms on the estate, and no less than forty smaller farmers or "Bauern," as they are called in this part of Germany. In Mecklenburgh at the time of which I write the "Bauer" or peasant was still a bondsman, or "leib-nigenen." The English word "peasant," however, conveys no idea of the class here designated. The English peasant is a labourer, earning his weekly wages, by the sweat of his brow and the toil of his hands. The North-German peasant is often, if not always, a very wealthy man, as the thirty years' war, and those of Frederick the Great's time prove: it was the "peasant" who brought the substantial thews and sinews to aid in those mighty struggles. The Bauer's house is warm and large, and substantially built; he has capital in the bank, and dowries for his daughters in his coffers; and great chests full of cloth and linen; and hoards of wool and flax and corn. His house is roughly furnished, and his life of the simplest and most primitive; he and his wife and daughters sit down to meals with their farm-labourers; and the women of the family cook, wash, and brew with the meanest of their maids. Yet, not unfrequently, he sends his daughters to town to be taught accomplishments, though when they return home it be to resume all the old menial duties, to the utter oblivion of "Shakspeare and the musical glasses." He invariably speaks *Plat-Deutsch*, or low German, in his family and with his servants, and expects to be answered in the same dialect. As a rule, he is frugal, even grasping; hoarding for hoarding's sake, and chuckling with ponderous satisfaction over the thoughts of what treasures of gold, and flax, and cloth, and linen, lay hidden in his coffers. The "Bauer" drives into town behind four thorough-breds, in an uncouth waggon, like the gabled roof of a house inverted (furnished with a row of seats, one behind the other, hard and uncompromising to the last degree). He gives his daughters to the highest bidder, and according to circumstances they get their fifty or eighty thousand thalers dowry, and carry their thriftiness with them to aid their husbands in the accumulation of further treasure. In every Bauer's house is a room devoted to the reception of company; this holy of holies is kept scrupulously

clean ; swept and garnished, and dusted with a piety and devotion worthy of a better object ; is approached with feelings of awe, and only unlocked on festive occasions.

On Count Lauenbrück's property the ten farmers of whom I have spoken were all wealthy men, with their flocks and herds, and hayricks and granaries ; prosperous and growing daily richer ; but they were men from all parts of Germany—north, south, east, and west, whilst the "Bauer" had, from father to son, inherited, from century to century, the right to till the ground, which yet, *de facto*, was not their own. There was much talk of letting these peasants buy their freedom, but whether in later days the project was realised, I do not know. Looking into the diary which I kept at that time, I find a notice conjuring up the old days, and telling of afternoon visits to the "peasants," and farmers, and of the hospitable welcome we invariably received.

The reapers were already busy amongst the corn, and the great golden sheaves stood piled together in many of the fields, whilst the glorious weather seemed to promise that before the end of the first week of August all the stores would be garnered in. We lived almost entirely out of doors ; and the evenings were now so mild and fine that we ventured on long excursions, often returning by the light of the broad harvest moon.

Perhaps some notes from the journal which I kept at that time may serve to give an insight into the calm of our daily life.

August 1.—Drove after dinner, with Hilda, Fritz, and Count Karl, to visit the pastor of Arvenshagen and his wife. Found a large white house, neat and trim to an almost painful degree. The Herr Pastor, though a young man, has such a peculiarly pedantic sanctimonious manner that he impressed me most disagreeably. His wife, who also is quite young (they have only been married a year or two), wore a subdued, dispirited air, which I immediately ascribed to the depressing influence which her unsympathetic husband must exercise upon her. We were led into the best parlour, the white boards glistening with much scrubbing, the furniture polished to a degree of brightness more suggestive of oil and turpentine than of comfort. Before the sofa lay a large rug or square carpet ; otherwise there was an expanse of floor sufficient to drive terror into the heart of the most enterprising of housemaids, unrelieved by rug or mat. On the table, besides a cloth and

monotone of her spouse. Her absence was presently accounted for by the appearance of coffee and biscuits, of which we solemnly partook, sitting, according to rank, round the triply-decked table; Brunhilda and I on the sofa (the place of honour in Germany); Count Karl next to Hilda, Fritz next to me, the pastor and his wife opposite to us. After coffee we proceeded to the church, an ugly, tasteless structure, with a red-tiled roof and saddle-back tower; within all glaring with whitewash and paint, and, *horribile dictu!* with a splendidly carved pulpit and screen of oak painted light blue!

"This is all newly done up, you see," said the pastor (waving his hand round the church with an air of great unction). "I was uncertain as to the pulpit; but the painter told me, as the wood was so worm-eaten, that I could not do better than have it painted, in order to preserve it as long as might be. The screen" (with another wave of his hand) "was done to match!"

I was glad to follow the party into the vestry, and escaping from this scene of whitewash and sacrilege, to solace my soul with the inspection of some wondrous old black-letter folios. Here we also found some most curious specimens of artful penmanship and illumination, real treasures to the antiquary or bibliopole; amongst other entries were one that interested me much, it ran as follows:—"Died, on the —th day of —, 17—, His Excellency Count Hans Christian Frederick August Ludwig Max Von Lauenbrück, patron of this Church, and some time Chamberlain and Prime Minister to His Majesty George I., by the grace of God, King of England and Hanover,"—the ink as black as though the entry had been made yesterday. After this, we went into the pastor's garden. I could not help noticing that his timid young wife looked at him every moment for sanction and approval—nay, that she almost asked for his permission before she answered the most common-place question.

"I think she is not happy," I said to Hilda, as we drove homewards through the evening sunshine.

"Perhaps not," she answered, abstractedly; "but it's all the same in the long-run, I suppose."

I looked at her, surprised at her indifferent tone, but she was evidently thinking of other things. There is certainly something wrong with Hilda. I hope it is nothing serious.

August 4.—This has been a tiring day. At five o'clock a serenade under the windows from a band of village musicians, in honour of the old count's birthday. At half-past eight, breakfast in the pavilion in the grand avenue. Pastor, doctor, forester, steward, gardener, &c., make their bows and congratulate the

whole family on the auspicious event. They are invited to take a cup of coffee, after which follows the inevitable cigar; Count Lauenbrück handing a case of choice Habanas round to his guests, an important feature in German hospitality. The gentlemen promenade in the avenue, talking harvest, game prospects, farm-machinery, with, now and then, a dash of politics—these of the mildest description. The doctor tells us that in one village the harvest stands rotting in the fields for want of labourers, the population having been diminished by cholera; he adds, it is his opinion, that before long the country will be in great straits for want of labourers; that the iniquitous laws respecting marriage—the hatred of the people to the system of servitude (leading them to escape *à tout prix*, and surreptitiously to emigrate), will produce effects most inimical to the farmers and great landowners. The pastor mildly assents to the observations on marriage, but objects to the too great freedom of the lower orders, as implied by their complete emancipation. The roll of carriages announces coming guests. The Countesses Irene and Brunhilda await their *entrée* on the scene in *peignoirs* and muslin caps. And now comes a deluge of farmers and farmers' wives, interspersed with several pastors and their better halves, and a lawyer or two from the neighbouring villages. The ladies are all gaily dressed: the men, in black, with tail-coats (made in the year one, A.D.) and white or lemon-coloured kid gloves, several sizes too large for their hands, bow profoundly in the delivery of their congratulations, whilst their spouses bob, slide, dip, and wriggle, with an agility one would never have suspected them of, seeing their substantial proportions. They also wear white kid gloves, and garments gorgeous in colouring and bold in design; their faces are smiling, red, and shiny, and they look prosperous in the extreme. More coffee, more cigars, and more promenading. The village musicians, seated in ambuscade beneath a grove of pine-trees, play their best pieces: the music has all the exhilarating effect which conversation has on canary-birds, and soon the whole society is chirping, twittering, and cackling in a pleasing variety of tones. Hilda looks at me and smiles. Count Lauenbrück, somewhat pale, sighs, once or twice, rather more audibly than good manners would sanction; he catches himself up, however, directly, and with habitual politeness, apologetically remarks that the weather is very warm. This original observation is met by a chorus of assent. Hilda smiles again. The musicians, invigorated by wines and cold meats, arise like giants refreshed by sleep, and resume their instruments (of torture?) with renewed energy. The air is cloudy with tobacco. The chirping, twittering, and cackling recommences with the music. I begin to feel faint, when, at a mysterious signal given

by the eldest lady in company, the whole party arises, and—according to age, or some other occult rules of precedence unknown to me—begin to take their departure. They are hospitably requested to return in the evening, and this they promise to do with an unanimity which pleases me, because it shows how popular Count Lauenbrück is amongst his people.

Later in the day, Hilda and I visited the poor girl in prison. We found her in a wretched state, and Hilda at once went to her father-in-law, who, returning with her, ordered that the unhappy creature should be brought up into a room on the ground-floor, and—on Hilda's begging it as a birthday grace—he gave leave for her to have some knitting and a book of devotions put into her room. She received all these little favours with the utmost apathy and indifference.

"What will the secretary say to us, papa?" asked Hilda—(she always called the count, "papa," when she was in a caressing mood).

"I shall not allow him to say anything," answered he, hastily. "I will not permit a girl who is *awaiting* her trial to be driven mad by solitary confinement in a dungeon, so long as I am master in my own house. If any one ventures to question my acts, I am responsible for them."

Hilda glided her hand into her father-in-law's. I like to see the sympathy between these two. We went out of the prison-house relieved and cheerful. They say this unhappy creature will be sentenced to four years' imprisonment. The people are in a state of serfdom difficult to realise in the nineteenth century. Count Lauenbrück hopes the legislature will alter the present state of things before long. According to existing laws, the master is responsible for the maintenance of his servants. How unpleasant, then, must additional expenses be in the shape of helpless children! If these servants run away, and are found in a distant part of the country, they are returned (at his expense) to their master, who becomes again responsible for their maintenance. The population, they tell me, is rapidly decreasing, in consequence of this short-sighted system; and yet there is great opposition to any movement in a right direction.

Later in the day, Hilda and I took a bottle of wine, some fruit meat, and cakes, to the poor girl. We found her knitting.

"Hullo!" cried Fritz, who saw us going in with our edibles—"that's against the laws, you know."

"Nonsense! don't meddle with my doings."

"But, Hilda, seriously, if the secretary sees you, there'll be no end of a row."

"Let him see me!"

"Take care, in seeing, that he does not also conquer you."

"I defy him."

"What temerity!"

"In a good cause."

"*C'est selon.*"

But the end of it was, Fritz went in with us, and patting the girl kindly on the shoulder, bade her drink his father's health.

A gleam of animal pleasure shot into her eyes as she saw the rich food. For a moment she hesitated, but the next she was devouring cakes, meat, and fruit indiscriminately, with an avidity and hungry satisfaction not pleasant to behold.

I turned away. And such poor, misguided, uneducated boors as these shall be judged by the same law as that by which the rich, the polished, and refined are judged! Going, about five o'clock, into the dining-hall, this afternoon, I found Count Karl and Fritz engaged in the manufacture of "bowle," and speedily I was initiated into the mysteries of this terrestrial nectar. Slicing pineapples, they laid them at the bottom of a large glass barrel, made expressly for the purpose; on this they put layers of sugar—"Not too much, and not too little, as there were ladies in the case," Fritz observed, "but preserving the *juste milieu*." On the top of this came Rhein wine, clear and golden, and a bottle of claret—"to give it a colour," said Count Karl; after which it was placed bodily in ice, to be baptised, when the supreme moment came, with sundry bottles of sparkling champagne.

At six o'clock the company began to arrive. The ladies, all dressed after one pattern, soon separated themselves from the gentleman, who adjourned to the skittle-ground, where they remained till supper was announced at eight o'clock. The time passed wearily enough until that moment with us of the weaker sex: there was endless domestic talk amongst all the good *menageres*. Baby created a favourable diversion by his appearance in a low white frock, tied up with gorgeous scarlet bows, and adorned with an immense sash of the same colour, and red morocco shoes to correspond. Nurse bore him proudly aloft amongst the savages (as I felt morally convinced she was secretly calling them in her own mind); and her charge, being in an affable temper, "grabbed" indiscriminately at every bow or piece of superfluous ribbon which attracted his attention, laughing and crowing at the devastation he made. As the babies here are swathed up in yards of bandage, pinioning their arms quite tight, and giving one the impression of Lilliputian mummies, his airy costume excited extreme wonder; and, had they deemed such a thing allowable, many, if not all, of the matrons would have remonstrated with me on my experimental education; but the laws of etiquette prevailing, they good-

naturedly contented themselves with expressions of delight at his lively ways and beautifully-embroidered garments.

The ten large rooms on the ground-floor were thrown open, and after supper we danced in the marble hall. Count Lauenbrück opened the ball with me; his beautiful wife standing up with the oldest tenant; Fritz leading out the tenant's wife, and Hilda having Count Karl for her partner. After this we all danced indiscriminately with the different farmers, and all went "merry as a marriage bell" till the "bowle" coming in, a solemn function began, trying in the extreme to all parties more immediately concerned in it.

During the dancing the three pastors had been solacing themselves with a quiet rubber of whist, but on the nectar appearing they rose simultaneously to their feet; then being armed with three goblets of the sparkling rosy, they advanced towards where Count Lauenbrück was standing, like a deputation of crows arriving unexpectedly on the scene, and, bowing profoundly, the senior pastor began his speech, which sounded to me very pompous, semi-religious, semi-mundane, but of interminable length. Count Lauenbrück's face was a study during the delivery of this oration, which had, no doubt, caused the pastor many hours of anxious thought and careful preparation. At length it came to an end. "All that's bright must fade," whispered Fritz to me; but his observation was almost drowned in the clashing of glasses which followed, every one coming to congratulate their lord and master, with a brimming glass of "bowle" in his hand, and striking it in token of friendship, loyalty, and good faith, against the count's crystal goblet. Then followed Pastor No. 2, with his address; and then Pastor No. 3, my friend from Arvens-hagen, pronounced his oration with great unction, his poor little wife looking at him all the while with eyes of solemn awe and admiration. Dancing, and eating, and drinking (chief elements in popular German felicity), were now resumed with great spirit and a capacity for enjoyment calculated to strike the incapable with feelings of envy. At length the moment for departure came, Countess Irene, pale and tired, sat on a sofa in the yellow drawing-room (the scene of Fritz's somnolent exploits), but she rose when the matrons flocked in to make their adieux. This they did *in posse*, and all repeated the same formula, the men following their spouses, and the couples pairing off in the hall. Having "sped the parting guests," Count Lauenbrück gave orders that the servants should come in and finish the evening with a dance, and demolish the remains of the feast, whilst we retired to bed.

Hilda had looked beautiful the whole evening, in a light-blue silk, with blush roses in her hair yet she did not seem in spirits.

I complimented her on her appearance. She smiled faintly. "I do it to please the people," she answered, but it was as though she had said "to please the pigs,"—so bitter was her manner; yet that familiar expression could scarcely have suggested more unflattering comparisons than her wearied, spiritless manner did.

This day's entertainment differed in so far from a tenant ball, that none of the guests were invited. Their coming was an act of voluntary homage to their lord and master, and the entertainment that followed was, to a certain extent, impromptu. Of course, precedent had provided for all contingencies, and there was abundance of good things for supper. Those who so came were invited to stay, but other than verbal invitations there were none. The musicians had come of their own accord, and they remained by the count's command, losing nothing, we may be sure, by their detention.

August 6.—On the roof above my rooms sit, day and night, two magnificent storks, tending their young, and making a singular, creaking or chattering noise, by clapping their long bills together. That is, the lady sits, but her spouse stands on one leg, sentinel over the nest, and so immoveable that one can scarcely believe him to be alive. The people regard these birds with almost superstitious reverence, and would not kill one for any earthly consideration. Hilda tells me that he on whose barn, or roof a stork builds its nest is regarded with feelings of envy by all his neighbours, as it betokens good luck and blessings innumerable. Certain it is, that when an addition comes to the family, the little ones are told "the stork" has brought the baby-brother or sister; and the country people on seeing the first stork in the spring of the year, always "wish" something, in the firm faith that their aspirations will be fulfilled.

Last year one of the gardeners here shot a stork, thinking it was some new specimen of the feathered tribe, for the head of an immense arrow stuck in its neck, which, on examination, proved to be of *Indian* manufacture! It is now in the museum at Schwerin.

Amongst other interesting anecdotes of storks is one for the truth of which Hilda was willing to vouch. A friend of hers, residing in a neighbouring state, and who watched with the greatest interest the yearly migrations of these quaint birds, had a pair on her roof, of most social disposition. The male bird would often descend to the garden for food; but on one occasion it in some way injured its wing, and could not get up to the roof again. The lady tended it with the greatest solicitude; but, before it got well enough to fly, she caused a small metal box to be made, which she secured to its leg by means of wires, and in which she laid a parchment, with the date, her name, and address; begging anyone

who should find the box to write her word where the stork had been at the time of its being found. Five years afterwards, she received a present of a splendid cashmere shawl, sent to her by some pasha, with a most complimentary note, stating the stork had lost the box in his garden, and was now no more. Such gallantry may put our Western gentleman to the blush!

August 7.—A peculiarity in the bathing arrangements here is not unworthy of note. The ladies never wear bathing-dresses. My costume creates quite a sensation when I emerge from my machine; but the attendants, regarding it as an innovation, are not pleased at it, assuring me that it is strictly forbidden by the doctors! I wonder what our Brighton doctors would say to this? But, then, it is true that "circumstances alter cases." And Mecklenburgh is such a Conservative country.

August 9.—Went to church; strange contradiction, in the shape of an utterly formless service; six candlesticks and a crucifix on the altar; intoning of the few prayers there were by the pastor, in a black gown and Elizabethan ruff, who gave us an Apostolic blessing (waving his hand in the air at the name of the Trinity), at which everyone bowed three times, and, making a cross over the congregation, though no one knelt, or attempted to kneel, from first to last.

We sat in an opera-box upstairs, furnished with a stove, and arm-chairs, footstools, carpets, and curtains to draw in the front of the box if we should wish to seclude ourselves from the vulgar gaze. The chasseur carried up a large bundle of hymn-books, which he ranged along the ledge of the box, and, after dusting the stove and arranging the curtains, he departed, leaving us to our devotions, which, let us hope, were of a fervent character. The pastor, on ascending the pulpit, bowed most civilly to our *logs*. I was surprised to see his salutation returned. Then he preached his sermon, and as it was about "Martha being cumbered about with much serving," it appeared to me to have an epigrammatic flavour, which, probably, the good housewives, to whom it was addressed, would not have viewed with the same leniency as I was disposed to do. However, the Herr Pastor was quite single-minded in all he said, and not responsible for my application. As the morning-service begins at nine o'clock, we were out of church at half-past ten; and as there is no second service, I think we may conclude the pastor's Sunday duties are not onerous ones. He dined with us; and when we drove away in the afternoon, he was deep in cribbage with Herr von Lützow, to whom cards are necessities, and whist as meat and drink.

Away we drove to Breeko, one of the most beautiful farms on the estate, Hilda told me, situated on the border of a magnificent

forest from whence there is a lovely view sea-wards. We were, as usual, most hospitably welcomed by the farmer and his wife. Between sixty and seventy horses were turned into the yard for our inspection; we then adjourned to the garden where we had coffee, and from thence took an hour's walk in the woods. I never saw such trees, some of almost tropical growth, one of such enormous size that the Grand Duke, passing through the forest singled it out from its fellows, and Count Lauenbrück causing it to be enclosed, carved his name and the date on the trunk, a memorial of a *chasse* which had been held here. Passing through the forest we came suddenly to the edge of a cliff, beneath which lay the calm blue waters of the Baltic, and from whence the setting sun illuminated the view stretched out before us; the Gulf of Neustadt, the Bay of Wismar, and, far on the horizon, the little Danish islands. On our return we found a heavy tea awaiting us; the farmer's wife and daughter, on hospitable care intent, waited upon us themselves; the abundance and variety of the viands was only equalled by the homely warmth and hospitality of our hosts. At length the carriages were announced; Fritz, Hilda, Mr. Braun, (the little artist) and I, in one; Count Lauenbrück, his wife, and brother, in the other. So we arrived safely at home about ten o'clock, to find the two gentlemen sitting precisely in the same positions as when we left them, only having exchanged cribbage for picquet. All satisfied with the employment of their well-spent Sunday, retired to rest, at peace with themselves and the whole world.

M. DU CHAILLU IN EQUATORIAL AFRICA *

It is natural that, in the preface to his present work, M. Du Chaillu should have a few words of fond and defensive retrospection by way of protest against the scepticism which his "Explorations and Adventures in Equatorial Africa" encountered a few years ago. The science of to-day is, in many directions, making the world as credulous as did the ignorance and superstition of the dark or middle ages; and it does seem hard that a traveller who penetrates into unexplored and unimagined regions should be taken to task if he happens to bring home a budget of information that does not, in every respect, conform to the standard of metropolitan experience. It was decidedly illogical to argue from the fact that because the gorilla does not ordinarily occur in the course of a walk down Pall Mall, that therefore it may not find a shifting *habitat* in the heart of a tropical forest. The unbelief of former gainsayers has weighed upon the mind of M. Du Chaillu; and, in spite of the chivalrous advocacy of Mr. Spurgeon, and the countenance of Mr. Layard, he seems to have felt that something like a tarnish rested on his honour, until he could exultingly refute the calumnies of the popular or scientific infidel. It is some small comfort for M. Du Chaillu to reflect that he is not the first traveller who has ventilated novelties at the hazard of his reputation. The initial paragraphs of his preface have a mingled air of pathos and of triumph. Far be it from us to grudge the latter to a man who has adventured and suffered so much in order to set himself right with a truth-loving public.

The position of an explorer of unknown countries in England is peculiar, and very difficult. If he returns home with nothing new or striking to relate, he is voted a bore, and his book has no chance of being read; if he has some wonders to unfold, connected with Geography, the Natives, or Natural History, the fate of Abyssinian Bruce too often awaits him: his narrative being held up to scorn and ridicule, as a tissue of figments.

"It was my lot, on the publication of my first volume of travels in Equatorial Africa, to meet with a reception of that sort from many persons in England and Germany. In fact, I had visited a country previously unexplored by Europeans—the wooded region bordering the Equator, in the interior of Western Africa—and thus it was my good fortune to observe the habits of several remarkable species of animals found nowhere else. Hence my narrative

A Journey to Ashango-Land: And Further Penetration into Equatorial Africa. By PAUL B. DU CHAILLU, Author of "Explorations in Equatorial Africa." With Map and Illustrations. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street.

describing unknown animals was condemned. The novelty of the subject was too striking for some of my critics; and not only were the accounts I gave of the animals and native tribes stigmatised as false, but my journey into the interior itself was pronounced a fiction.

“Although hurt to the quick by these unfair and ungenerous criticisms, I cherished no malice towards my detractors, for I knew the time would come when the truth of all that was essential in the statements which had been disputed would be made clear; I was consoled, besides, by the support of many eminent men, who refused to believe that my narrative and observations were deliberate falsehoods. Making no pretensions to infallibility, any more than other travellers, I was ready to acknowledge any mistake that I might have fallen into, in the course of compiling my book from my rough notes. The only revenge I cherished was that of better preparing myself for another journey into the same region, providing myself with instruments and apparatus which I did not possess on my first exploration, and thus being enabled to vindicate my former accounts by facts not to be controverted.

“It is necessary, however, to inform my English readers that most of the principal statements in my former book which were sneered at by my critics, have been already amply confirmed by other travellers in the same part of Africa, or by evidence which has reached England.”

M. Du Chaillu's present volume is an itinerary of some three hundred miles in an easterly direction from the mouth of the river Fernand Vaz, situated about three minutes to the south of the equator. The objects of his journey, although his record of it does not partake of a strictly technical character in any respect whatever, were scientific. He took great pains, before starting on his expedition, to acquire that special knowledge and that mastery over instruments philosophical and artistic, which should give his researches the value of great intelligence and absolute trustworthiness. We are treated to a little botany, a little geology, a little mythology, meteorology, and astronomy, and to a little more still of geography, zoology, and ethnology. But about his principal objects in the journey, of which the volume before us is the chronicle, the traveller may be allowed to speak for himself:—

“The principal object I had in view in my last journey, was to make known with more accuracy than I had been able to do in my former one, the geographical features of the country, believing this to be the first duty of a traveller in exploring new regions. To enable me to do this I went through a course of instruction in the use of instruments, to enable me to fix positions by astronomical observations and compass bearings and to ascertain

the altitudes of places. I learnt also how to compute my observations, and test myself their correctness. It is for others to judge of the results of my endeavours in this important department of a traveller's work ; I can only say that I laboured hard to make my work as accurate as possible, and although I was compelled, much to my sorrow, to abandon photography and meteorological observations, through the loss of my apparatus and instruments, I was fortunately able to continue astronomical observations nearly to the end of my route."

M. Du Chaillu's adventure terminated abruptly in a disappointment, and in a retreat, which, *mutatis mutandis*, we could not help, in its earlier stages, comparing with that which the immortal Ten Thousand accomplished under the leadership of Xenophon, the general and historian of the difficult and dreary march to the seaboard of the Euxine. Our traveller set out to pierce the continent of Africa, and he retired baffled, yet with honour, after he had done little more than, so to say, scratch the skin. Inspired, at the beginning, with the lofty ambition of reaching the Nile by an approach from the west, he hoped to float down to the Mediterranean on the bosom of the sacred and yet almost inviolable river.

Having enlisted the services of a small number of Commi men as body-guard, who were fired by the thought that they were marching on London, he and his escort were passed on from one tribe to another, who furnished him with guides and porters, until the accidental discharge of a gun by one of his sworn and faithful henchmen forced him to a retrograde journey, when he had penetrated no further than Mouaou-Kembo, in the land of the Ashangos.

M. Du Chaillu does not write with the reckless dash of Captain Benton ; but we are bound to say, that neither does he write with that gallant traveller's sweeping censure of the negro character, or with his haughty and unsympathetic air of unapproachable superiority. M. Du Chaillu's volume, if not absolutely absorbing, is at least so interesting, that its perusal, once begun, will scarcely be interrupted, except upon compulsion, by the enthusiastic reader. Yet there is a certain monotony about it. The main features of his adventures are for ever repeating themselves. Setting out with an enormous outfit—an important part of which being engulfed in the attempt to land on the back of a "promising billow," which turned out treacherous—he had to wait near the coast until the deficiencies were made good from this country, before he was in a position to proceed. Then, and continually, until he got clear of it all, his amazing treasure was as truly *impedimenta* to himself, as it was a snare to the simple-minded and primitive peoples with whom he came in contact. The avarice of the "gentle

savages" was perpetually being excited by the sight of the precious things, which it was their dearest wish in life to appropriate. Everything was done, in every place, to delay his departure. Every village chief angled with the minnow, which he called a goat, in order that he might take from "Chaillu" the triton which he called a regalia, but which would be known in London as a Bumble uniform. On an unknown path, and in the heart of a nearly inextricable forest, our traveller's porters would take the opportunity of striking their burdens, and demanding an increase of their stipulated pay. On such occasions, the Commi men came out grandly and effectively. These faithful fellows, at the word of command, pointed their rifles at the heads of the refractory, and by this means always succeeded in reducing the malcontents to a good-humoured and grinning submission. This submission was ordinarily accompanied by a discovery of their simple and palpable *finesse*. "They were only trying it on. Was it possible that they would dream of leaving the traveller exposed in the forest? Were they such dogs?" Not at all. Heaven forbid! They simply wanted more money—or beads, to give the reader a more accurate idea of their currency; and if the advance were not forthcoming, well, like philosophers in ebony, they must put up with the less, if they could not enforce the greater. Yet these very men, it ought to be stated, were ready to offer a share of their last mouthful, in moments of scarcity, to the men whom it would have been their supreme delight to bully into "largesse."

The great bugbear of human life in Africa, the great thorn in the flesh of the wayfarer who would sojourn in the tents of Ham, is the accursed and omnipresent fetishism, and the everlasting dread of witchcraft. The fears raised by these superstitions—not to mention that a tempest of small-pox swept off scores of victims at various places of M. Du Chaillu's route, much to that good gentleman's disadvantage—frequently became a raging nuisance. When a village came in sight there was need of no little diplomacy to accomplish the entry, and to gain the good-will of the panic-stricken people. This was, however, generally changed, before long, into a feeling of hospitality, and of desire to trade, as ardent as the previous repugnance to inter-communication. The character that our author presently achieved for being a spirit, and invulnerable, valuable as it was in many respects as an element of his safety, had its drawbacks, in adding to the difficulty of his first approaches to familiarity. When thievish porters returned to their native villages to die of the arsenic which they had wisely mingled with the salt, after having stolen both from the stores of the traveller, it was only certified the more that "Chaillu" had followed them to their homes with the vengeance of his dreadful spells, with the fatal incantations

of his almighty witchcraft. At one stage of his difficult progress, he began, indeed, "to dread the sight of an inhabited place. Either the panic-stricken people," he says, "fly from me, or remain to bore me with their insatiable curiosity, fickleness, greediness, and intolerable din. Nevertheless, I am obliged to do all I can think of to conciliate them, for I cannot do without them—it being impossible to travel without guides through this wilderness of forests, where the paths are so intricate."

So things went on, until, after more than eight months travelling, M. Du Chaillu had succeeded in penetrating nearly three hundred miles into the country, and halted at Mouaou-Kembo, in Ashango-land. Here it was that the accidental discharge of a gun in the hand of one of his followers, was the sudden collapse of the expedition. A man was killed; but he, wretched kern that he was, might have been paid for in beads. The negotiation, indeed, was being already carried on amicably, when it was unfortunately discovered that the head wife of the hitherto placable chief had also been slain. The insatiable bullet had penetrated the hut in which the wives and other domesticities of the great man were sheltered. The explorer had now nothing to look to but retreat, and no one to depend on but the intrepid Commi men, who had attended him so far from their homes as African savages seldom have the pluck or the enterprise willingly to wander. The whole band was now too small to carry off the goods, specimens, and photographic apparatus, and drawings. Maps, observations, rifles,—all had to be thrown aside into the bush in the scamper for life, out of the range of the poisoned arrows that harassed their retreating body. A few well-directed shots, and a courageous stand, at length caused the discomfiture of the pursuers, but not before M. Du Chaillu had been wounded in the side, and Igalu, the unlucky cause of all the disaster, but our traveller's staunchest and most intrepid friend, had been wounded in the leg. Happily, all reached the coast, in life and health, in September; and M. Du Chaillu embarked for England, where, in classic Twickenham, he has spent the intervening months in elaborating the volume which has already given entertainment to thousands, and brought its author into hot water and disputation with his old critic, Mr. Gray, of the British Museum, about, *inter alia*, an elegant animal which, for its sins, or for some other peculiarity, has been entitled Potamogale Velox.

Persons who have dropped a tear at the untimely fate of the chimpanzee at the Crystal Palace, will be gratified with the following information about the early history of Master Thomas. In a note at the end of the chapter in which the following paragraphs occur, M. Du Chaillu pathetically informs us that "the fire at the Crystal Palace, to which my unfortunate pet fell a sacrifice, occurred whilst these sheets were passing through the press."

"On the 1st of November a negro from a neighbouring village brought me a young male chimpanzee about three years old, which had been caught in the woods on the banks of the Npoulounay about three months previously. Thomas, for so I christened my little *protégé*, was a tricky little rascal, and afforded me no end of amusement; he was, however, very tame, like all young chimpanzees. Unfortunately Thomas was lame in one hand, several of the fingers having been broken and healed up in a distorted position. This was caused by his having been maltreated by the village dogs, who were sent in chase of him one day, when he escaped from his captors and ran into the neighbouring woods. I had Tom tied by a cord to a pole in the verandah of my hut, and fed him with cooked plantains and other food from my own table. He soon got to prefer cooked to raw food, and rejected raw plantains whenever they were offered to him. The difference in tameability between the young chimpanzee and the young gorilla is a fact which I have confirmed by numerous observations, and I must repeat it here, as it was one of those points which were disputed in my former work. A young chimpanzee becomes tame and apparently reconciled to captivity in two or three days after he is brought from the woods. The young gorilla I have never yet seen tame in confinement, although I have had four of them in custody, while still of a very early age.

"One day I witnessed an act of Master Thomas which seemed to me to illustrate the habits of his species in the wild state. A few days after he came into my possession I bought a domestic cat for my house; as soon as the young chimpanzee saw it he flew in alarm to his pole and clambered up it, the hair of his body becoming erect and his eyes bright with excitement. In a moment recovering himself he came down, and rushing on the cat, with one of his feet seized the nape of the animal, and with the other pressed on its back, as if trying to break its neck. Not wishing to lose my cat,

friend in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, where, I dare say, very many of my readers have seen him, and have laughed at his amusing tricks. I am credibly informed that his education at the Palace has become so far advanced that he understands what is going on when his own 'cartes de visite' are sold. A feint is sometimes made of carrying off one without paying for it, but Thomas rushes forward, screaming, to the length of his tether, to prevent the irregular transaction, and does not cease his noisy expressions of dissatisfaction until the money is paid down."

From the chimpanzee to the gorilla ought not to be a very unnatural transition :—

"I had not been at the village long before news came that gorillas had been recently seen in the neighbourhood of a plantation only half a mile distant. Early in the morning of the 25th of June I wended my way thither, accompanied by one of my boys, named Odanga. The plantation was a large one, and situated on very broken ground, surrounded by the virgin forest. It was a lovely morning; the sky was almost cloudless, and all around was still as death, except the slight rustling of the tree-tops moved by the gentle land breeze. When I reached the place, I had first to pick my way through the maze of tree-stumps and half-burnt logs by the side of a field of cassada. I was going quietly along the borders of this, when I heard, in the grove of plantain-trees towards which I was walking, a great crashing noise, like the breaking of trees. I immediately hid myself behind a bush, and was soon gratified with the sight of a female gorilla; but before I had time to notice its movements, a second and third emerged from the masses of colossal foliage; at length no less than four came into view.

"They were all busily engaged in tearing down the larger trees. One of the females had a young one following her. I had an excellent opportunity of watching the movements of the impish-looking band. The shaggy hides, the protuberant abdomens, the hideous features of these strange creatures, whose forms so nearly resemble man, made up a picture like a vision in some morbid dream. In destroying a tree, they first grasped the base of the stem with one of their feet, and then with their powerful arms pulled it down, a matter of not much difficulty with so loosely-formed a stem as that of the plantain. They then set upon the juicy heart of the tree at the bases of the leaves, and devoured it with great voracity. While eating they made a kind of clucking noise, expressive of contentment. Many trees they destroyed apparently out of pure mischief. Now and then they stood still and looked around. Once or twice they seemed on the point of starting off in alarm, but recovered themselves and continued their work. Gradually they got nearer to the edge of the dark forest,

and finally disappeared. I was so intent on watching them, that I let go the last chance of shooting one almost before I became aware of it.

"The next day I went again with Odanga to the same spot. I had no expectation of seeing gorillas in the same plantation, and was carrying a light shot gun, having given my heavy double-barrelled rifle to the boy to carry. The plantation extended over two hills, with a deep hollow between, planted with sugar-cane. Before I had crossed the hollow I saw on the opposite slope a monstrous gorilla, standing erect and looking directly towards me. Without turning my face I beckoned to the boy to bring me my rifle, but no rifle came,—the little coward had bolted, and I lost my chance. The huge beast stared at me for about two minutes, and then, without uttering any cry, moved off to the shade of the forest, running nimbly on his hands and feet.

"As my readers may easily imagine, I had excellent opportunity of observing, during these two days, the manner in which the gorillas walked when in open ground. They move along with great rapidity and on all fours, that is, with the knuckles of their hands touching the ground. Artists, in representing the gorilla walking, generally make the arms too much bowed outwards, and the elbows too much bent; this gives the figures an appearance of heaviness and awkwardness. When the gorillas that I watched left the plantain-trees, they moved off at a great pace over the ground, with their arms extended straight forwards towards the ground, and moving rapidly. I may mention also that having now opened the stomachs of several freshly-killed gorillas, I have never found anything but vegetable matter in them.

"When I returned to Nkongon Mbounda I found there my old friend Akondogo, chief of one of the Commi villages, who had just returned from the Ngobi country a little further south. To my great surprise and pleasure, he had brought for me a living gorilla, a young one, but the largest I had ever seen captured alive. Like Joe, the young male whose habits in confinement I described in 'Equatorial Africa,' this one showed the most violent and ungovernable disposition. He tried to bite every one who came near him, and was obliged to be secured by a forked stick closely applied to the back of his neck. This mode of imprisoning these animals is a very improper one if the object be to keep them alive and to tame them, but, unfortunately, in this barbarous country, we had not the materials requisite to build a strong cage. The injury caused to this one by the forked stick eventually caused his death. As I had some more hunting to do, I left the animal in charge of Akondogo until he should have an opportunity of sending it to me on the Fernand Vaz."

"The natives of all the neighbouring country were now so well aware that I wanted live gorillas, and was willing to give a high price for them, that many were stimulated to search with great perseverance; the good effects of this were soon made evident.

"One day, as I was quietly dining with Captain Holder, of the *Cambria* (a vessel just arrived from England), one of my men came in with the startling news that three live gorillas had been brought, one of them full grown. I had not long to wait; in they came. First, a very large adult female, bound hand and foot; then her female child, screaming terribly; and lastly, a vigorous young male, also tightly bound. The female had been ingeniously secured by the negroes to a strong stick, the wrists bound to the upper part and the ankles to the lower, so that she could not reach to tear the cords with her teeth. It was dark, and the scene was one so wild and strange that I shall never forget it. The fiendish countenances of the Calibanish trio—one of them distorted by pain, for the mother gorilla was severely wounded—were lit up by the ruddy glare of native torches. The thought struck me, what would I not give to have the group in London for a few days!

"The young male I secured by a chain which I had in readiness, and gave him henceforth the name of Tom. We untied his hands and feet; to show his gratitude for this act of kindness he immediately made a rush at me, screaming with all his might; happily the chain was made fast, and I took care afterwards to keep out of his way. The old mother gorilla was in an unfortunate plight. She had an arm broken and a wound in the chest, besides being dreadfully beaten on the head. She groaned and roared many times during the night, probably from pain.

"I noticed next day, and on many occasions, that the vigorous young male, whenever he made a rush at any one and missed his aim, immediately ran back. This corresponds with what is known of the habits of the large males in their native woods; when attacked they make a furious rush at their enemy, break an arm or tear his bowels open, and then beat a retreat, leaving their victim to shift for himself.

"The wounded female died in the course of the next day; her moanings were more frequent in the morning, and they gradually grew weaker as her life ebbed out. Her death was like that of a human being, and afflicted me more than I could have thought possible. Her child clung to her to the last, and tried to obtain milk from her breast after she was dead. I photographed them both when the young one was resting in its dead mother's lap. I kept the young one alive for three days after its mother's death. It moaned at night most piteously. I fed it on goat's milk, for it was too young to eat berries. It died the fourth day, having

taken an unconquerable dislike to the milk. It had, I think, begun to know me a little. As to the male, I made at least a dozen attempts to photograph the irascible little demon, but all in vain. The pointing of the camera towards him threw him into a perfect rage, and I was almost provoked to give him a sound thrashing. The day after, however, I succeeded with him, taking two views, not very perfect, but sufficient for my object.

"I must now relate how these three animals were caught, premising that the capture of the female was the first instance that had come to my knowledge of an adult gorilla being taken alive. The place where they were found was on the left bank of the Fernand Vaz, about thirty miles above my village. At this part a narrow promontory projects into the river. It was the place where I had intended to take the distinguished traveller, Captain Burton, to show him a live gorilla, if he had paid me a visit, as I had expected; for I had written to invite him whilst he was on a tour from his consulate at Fernando Po to several points on the West African coast. A woman, belonging to a neighbouring village, had told her people that she had seen two squads of female gorillas, some of them accompanied by their young ones, in her plantain field. The men resolved to go in chase of them, so they armed themselves with guns, axes, and spears, and sallied forth. The situation was very favourable for the hunters; they formed a line across the narrow strip of land and pressed forward, driving the animals to the edge of the water. When they came in sight of them, they made all the noise in their power, and thus bewildered the gorillas, who were shot or beaten down in their endeavours to escape. There were eight adult females altogether, but not a single male. The negroes thought the males were in concealment in the adjoining woods, having probably been frightened away by the noise.

"This incident led me to modify somewhat the opinions I had expressed, in 'Adventures in Equatorial Africa,' regarding some of the habits of the gorilla. I there said that I believed it

that solitary and aged gorillas are sometimes seen almost white; the hair becomes grizzled with age, and I have no doubt that the statement of their becoming occasionally white with extreme old age is quite correct."

We have said that the pest of native society, and the crucial trouble of the white man who travels in equatorial Africa, is the prevailing and degrading superstitions of the people. There seems to be no tribe and no individual superior to the belief in witchcraft. M. Du Chaillu even relates an anecdote which proves that a form of the mediæval were-wolf superstition is a prevalent species of monomania amongst the negroes. The debasement of fetish worship is universal; and amongst other customs which the votaries of a higher civilisation would consider to be more honoured in the breach than in the observance, is one of mixing with the traveller's drink scrapings from the skulls of their ancestors, in order to soften his heart, and make him prodigal of presents. We do not purpose at present to illustrate the darker points of the negro character; we prefer to extract a story, which, showing fancy and something like poetry in combination with superstition, would almost persuade us to belief that in ages less or more remote, the negro once had a system for which the term "mythology" would not be too dignified. We prefix a couple of paragraphs, which will make the reader acquainted with the accessories and the circumstances in which M. Du Chaillu had the pleasure of making acquaintance with the myth which follows almost immediately:

"I was now left with the Ashira rascals, eight in number, and with only two of my faithful Commi men to aid me in keeping watch over them. We were encamped in a small open space in the loneliest and gloomiest part of the forest, on the top of a long sloping path which led into a deep valley on the Otando side. We were absolutely without food, and went supperless to bed, myself and my two men Rebouka and Ngoma having agreed to watch in our turns the Ashira, who pretended to be asleep in their olakos on the opposite side of the road. My baggage, alas! still too large and the cause of all my troubles, lay piled up beside our camp fire in front of us.

"We whiled away the early hours of night in talking of Quengueza and the country by the sea-shore, or in relating and listening to legends and fables. This latter amusement was always to me a pleasant way of passing the time. The memory of the Equatorial African is well stored with parables, fables, and extravagant stories of one kind or another. Having improved my acquaintance, on the present journey, with several of the native languages, I was able to note down almost every story I heard, and thus accumulated a large collection of them. The following

legend, connected probably with some natural phenomenon in one of the neighbouring rivers, is a sample of these African stories:—

“Atungulu Shimba was a king who attained the chief authority in his village by right of succession, and built eight new houses. But Atungulu had sworn, that whosoever should quarrel with him he would eat him. And so it really happened until, finally, after eating his enemies one after the other, he was left alone in his dominions, and he then married the beautiful Arondo-ienu, daughter of a neighbouring king.

“It was Atungulu’s habit, after his marriage, to go daily into the forest to trap wild animals, with the Ashinga net, leaving his wife alone in the village. One day Njali, the eldest brother of Arondo-ienu—for Coniambie (King of the Air), their father, had three sons—came to take back his sister out of the clutches of Atungulu Shimba; but the king arrived unexpectedly, and ate him up. Next came the second brother, and he was also eaten. At last came Reninga, the third brother, and there was a great fight between him and Atungulu, which lasted from sunrise till midday, when Reninga was overpowered and eaten like his two brothers before him.

“Reninga, however, had a powerful fetich on him, and came out of Atungulu alive. The King, on seeing him, exclaimed, ‘How have you contrived this, to come back?’ He then smeared him and Arondo-ienu with *alumbi* chalk, and putting his hands together, blew a loud whistle, saying afterwards, ‘Reninga, take back your sister.’ He then went and threw himself into the water, to drown himself, through grief for the loss of his wife.

“Before dying, Atungulu Shimba declared that if Arondo-ienu ever married again, she would die; and the prophecy came true, for she married another man and died soon after. Her brother Reninga, thereupon, through sorrow for the loss of his sister, threw himself into the water in the place where Atungulu died, and was drowned.

“At the spot where Atungulu Shimba died, a stranger sees, when he looks into the deep water, the bodies of the king and Arondo-ienu side by side, and the nails of his beautiful wife, all glittering like looking-glasses. From that time, water has obtained the property of reflecting objects, and has ever since been called by the name of Arondo-ienu, and people have been able to see their own images reflected on its surface, on account of the transparency given to it by the bright nails of Arondo-ienu.”*

Medicine does not appear to have attained to any degree of

* Ienu means “looking-glass” in the languages of tribes near the sea.

cultivation or practice amongst the natives of Equatorial Africa. Thus, M. Du Chaillu :

"On the 22nd of April I saw a curious example of the surgical practice of the Otando people. In the stillness of the afternoon, when the heat of the vertical sun compels every one to repose, I was startled by loud screams, as though some unfortunate being was being led to death for witchcraft. On going to the place, I found a helpless woman, who was afflicted with leprosy, and suffering, besides, under an attack of lumbago, undergoing an operation for the latter disease at the hands of the Otando doctor and his assistants. They had made a number of small incisions in the back of the poor creature with a sharp-pointed knife of the country, and were rubbing into the gashes a great quantity of lime-juice mixed with pounded cayenne-pepper. The doctor was rubbing the irritating mixture into the wounds with all his might, so that it was no wonder that the poor creature was screaming with pain, and rolling herself on the ground. It is wonderful to observe the faith all these negroes have in lime-juice mixed with cayenne pepper. They use it not only as an embrocation, but also internally for dysentery, and I have often seen them drink as much as half a tumblerful of it in such cases. The pepper itself I believe to be a very useful medicine in this climate, for I have often found benefit from it when unwell and feverish, by taking an unusual quantity in my food.

"Whilst I am on the subject of native doctoring, I must relate what I saw afterwards in the course of Mayolo's illness. I knew the old chief had been regularly attended by a female doctor, and often wondered what she did to him. At length one morning I happened to go into his house when she was administering her cures, and remained, an interested spectator, to watch her operations. Mayolo was seated on a mat, submitting to all that was done with the utmost gravity and patience. Before him was extended the skin of a wild animal (*Genetta*). The woman was engaged in rubbing his body all over with her hands, muttering all the while, in a low voice, words which I could not understand. Having continued this wholesome friction for some time, she took a piece of *alumbi* chalk and made with it a broad stripe along the middle of his chest and down each arm. This done, she chewed a quantity of some kind of roots and seeds, and, having well charged her mouth with saliva, spat upon him in different places, but aiming her heaviest shots at the parts most affected. Finally, she took a bunch of a particular kind of grass, which had been gathered when in bloom and was now dry, and, lighting it, touched with the flame the body of her patient in various places, beginning at the foot and gradually ascending to the head. I could perceive

that Mayolo smarted with the pain of the burns, when the torch remained too long. When the flame was extinguished the woman applied the burnt end of the torch to her patient's body, and so the operations ended.

"It seemed to me that there was some superstition of deep significance connected with the application of fire in these Otando cures. They appeared to have great faith in the virtues of fire, and this is perhaps not far removed from fire-worship. I asked the old woman why she used this kind of remedy, and what power she attributed to fire, but her only answer was that it prevented the illness with which Mayolo had been afflicted coming again. The female doctor, I need scarcely add, had come from a distance; for it is always so in primitive Africa—the further off a doctor or witchfinder lives, the greater his reputation."

We turn from the survey of African medicine with the determination to trust for the future with greater confidence in the prescriptions of our own Galens; but an enlightened perception of the beautiful, as exhibited in the chignons of the ladies of Ishogo, must not be passed over in silence. A hint may be gleaned from the few following descriptive paragraphs; in which, perhaps, one or two things are mentioned which public opinion would scarcely sanction as proper for importation into this country:

"The Ishogos are a fine tribe of negroes; they are strongly and well built, with well-developed limbs and broad shoulders. I consider them superior to the Ashiras in physique, and I remarked that they generally had finer heads, broader in the part where phrenologists place the organs of ideality. With some of them their general appearance reminded me of the Fans. The women have good figures; they tattoo themselves in various parts of the body—on the shoulders, arms, breast, back, and abdomen—and some of them have raised pea-like marks similar to those of the Apono women, between the eye-brows and on the cheeks. Both men and women adopt the custom of pulling out the two middle incisors of the upper jaw, but this mode of adding to their personal attraction is not so general as among the Aponos; many file their upper incisors and two or three of the lower ones to a point.

"The men and women ornament themselves with red powder, made by rubbing two pieces of bar-wood together; but their most remarkable fashions relate to the dressing of the hair. On my arrival at Igoumbie, I had noticed how curious the head-dresses of the women were, being so unlike the fashions I had seen among any of the tribes I had visited. Although these modes are sometimes very grotesque, they are not devoid of what English ladies, with their present fashions, might consider good taste: in short,

they cultivate a remarkable sort of chignons. I have remarked three different ways of hair-dressing as most prevalent among the Ishogo belles. The first is to train the hair into a tower-shaped mass elevated from eight to ten inches from the crown of the head; the hair from the forehead to the base of the tower, and also that of the back part up to the ears, being closely shaved off. In order to give shape to the tower, they make a framework, generally out of old pieces of grass-cloth, and fix the hair round it. All the chignons are worked up on a frame. Another mode is to wear the tower, with two round balls of hair, one on each side, above the ear. A third fashion is similar to the first, but the tower, instead of being perpendicular to the crown, is inclined obliquely from the back of the head, and the front of the head is clean shaven almost to the middle. The neck is also shorn closely up to the ears.

"The hair on these towers has a parting in the middle and on the sides, which is very neatly done. The whole structure must require years of careful training before it reaches the perfection attained by the leaders of Ishogo fashion. A really good chignon is not attained until the owner is about twenty or twenty-five years of age. It is the chief object of ambition with the young Ishogo women to possess a good well-trained and well-greased tower of hair of the kind that I describe. Some women are far better dressers of hair than others, and are much sought for—the fixing and cleaning of the hair requiring a long day's work. The woman who desires to have her hair dressed must either pay the hair-dresser or must promise to perform the same kind office to her neighbour in return.

"Once fixed these chignons remain for a couple of months without requiring to be re-arranged, and the mass of insect life that accumulates in them during that period is truly astonishing. However, the women make use of their large iron or ivory hairpins (which I described in 'Equatorial Africa') in the place of combs. The fashion of the "*chignon*" was unknown when I left Europe, so that to the belles of Africa belongs the credit of the invention. The women wear no ornaments in the ears, and I saw none who had their ears pierced; they are very different from the Apingi in this respect. Like the women of other tribes, they are not allowed to wear more than two denguïs, or pieces of grass-cloth, by way of petticoat. This stinted clothing has a ludicrous effect in the fat dames, as the pieces do not then meet well in the middle.

"The men also have fancy ways of trimming their hair. The most fashionable style is to shave the whole of the head except a circular patch on the crown, and to form this into three finely-plaited divisions, each terminating in a point and hanging down.

At the end of each of these they fix a large bead or a piece of iron or brass wire, so that the effect is very singular. The Ishogo people shave their eyebrows and pull out their eyelashes."

M. Du Chaillu obligingly furnishes us with an inventory of the *trousseau* of a bride of Mobana, a highland town of the Ashanges:

"Mobana is a large place, with houses like those of Niembouai. Numerous bee-hives hang against the houses, or are scattered among the plantain-trees. Goats are plentiful; some of them are of great size, and very fat. These generally form part of the dowry given when a woman is married. While at Mobana, I assisted at the departure of a young woman who had been given in marriage to a man of a neighbouring village. Her father was to take her there, with all the marriage outfit (*trousseau de mariage*). It consisted of eight of the plates of the country, such as I have already described; two large baskets for carrying plantains from the plantations, or calabashes full of water from the spring; a great number of calabashes; a large package of ground-nuts; a package of squash seeds; two dried legs of antelope; some fine *nchandas* (the name given to the denguis here), and her stool. Several members of her family carried this elaborate outfit. The bride-elect was smartly dressed; her chignon had been *built up* most elaborately the day before. As she left the village, the people remarked to each other, 'Her husband will see that the Mobana people do not send away their daughters with nothing?'

"Her old mother accompanied her to the end of the street, and then returned to her home, looking proud and happy at having seen her daughter go with such an outfit."

It was whilst remaining at Mayolo, on his return to the coast, that M. Du Chaillu had the pleasure of listening to the following legend. The time was evening; the place an encampment, around the fires of which many villagers were reclining. The narrator of the "story, or parable," was "a very talkative old fellow, who seemed to be the wag of the village." The little narrative is entitled Akenda Mbani.

"Redjioua had a daughter called Arondo, and she was very beautiful. Redjioua said, 'A man may give me slaves, goods, or ivory to marry my daughter, but he will not get her; I want only a man that will agree that when Arondo falls ill, he will fall ill also, and that when Arondo dies, he will die also.' Time went on; and, as people knew this, no one came to ask Arondo in marriage; but, one day, a man called Akenda Mbani ('never goes twice to the same place') came, and he said to Redjioua, 'I come to marry Arondo, your daughter; I come, because I will agree that when Arondo dies, I will die also.' So Akenda Mbani married Arondo. Akenda Mbani was a great hunter, and, after he

had married Arondo, he went hunting, and killed two wild boars. On his return, he said, 'I have killed two boars, and bring you one.' Redjioua said, 'Go and fetch the other.' Akenda Mbani said, 'My father gave me a *nconi* (a law) that I must never go twice to the same place.' Another day he went hunting again, and killed two antelopes; on his return, he said to Redjioua, 'Father, I have killed two kambi (antelopes), I bring you one.' The king answered, 'Please, my son-in-law, go and fetch the other.' He answered, 'You know I cannot go twice to the same place.'

"Another time he went hunting again, and killed two bongos (a kind of antelope). Then Redjioua, who saw that all the other animals were being lost, said, 'Please, my son-in-law, show the people the place where the other bongo is.' Akenda Mbani replied, 'If I do so I am afraid I shall die.'

"In the evening of the same day, a canoe from the Oroungou country came with goods, and remained on the river side. Akenda Mbani said to his wife Arondo, 'Let us go and meet the Oroungous.' They saw them, and then took a box full of goods, and then went back to their own house. The people of the village traded with the Oroungous; and, when the Oroungous wanted to go back, they came to Akenda Mbani, and he trusted them ten slaves, and gave them a present of two goats, and many bunches of plantains, mats, and fowls; then the Oroungous left. Months went on; but, one day, Arondo said to her husband, 'We have never opened the box that came with the Oroungous. Let us see what there is in it.' They opened it, and saw cloth; then Arondo said, 'Husband, cut me two fathoms of it, for I like it.' Then they left the room; then Arondo seated herself on the bed, and Akenda Mbani on a stool, when suddenly Arondo said, 'Husband, I begin to have a headache.' Akenda Mbani said, 'Ah, ah, Arondo, do you want me to die?' and he looked Arondo steadily in the face. He tied a bandage round her head, and did the same to his own. Arondo began to cry as her headache became worse; and, when the people of the village heard her cry, they came all round her. Redjioua came, and said, 'Do not cry, my daughter; you will not die.' Then Arondo said, 'Father, why do you say I shall not die? for, if you fear death, you may be sure it will come.*' She had hardly said these words than she expired. Then all the people mourned, and Redjioua said, 'Now my daughter is dead, Akenda Mbani must die also.'

"The place where people are buried is called Djimai; the villagers went there and dug a place for the two corpses, which

* "When an African is ill, his friends consider it will cause his death to say he will die."

were buried together. Redjiousa had a slave buried with Arondo, besides a tusk of an elephant, rings, mats, plates, and the bed on which Akenda Mbani and Arondo slept; the cutlass, the hunting bag, and the spear of Akenda Mbani were also buried. The people then said, 'Let us cover the things with sand, and make a little mound.' When Agambouai (the mouth-piece—the speaker of the village) heard of this, he said to Redjiousa, 'There are leopards here.' Then Redjiousa said, 'Do not have a mound over my child's burial-place, for fear that the leopards might come and scratch the ground and eat the corpse of my child.' Then the people said, 'Let us then dig a deeper hole,' and they took away Arondo and Akenda Mbani, and placed both on stools, and then dug and dug, and put back the things that were to be buried with Arondo, and then laid her in her place. Then they came to Akenda Mbani, who then awoke and said, 'I never go twice to the same place; you put me in the tomb and you took me away from it, though all of you knew that I never go to the same place again.' When Redjiousa heard of this he became very angry, and said, 'You knew that Akenda Mbani never goes twice to the same place; why did you remove him?' Then he ordered the people to catch Agambouai, and cut his head off.

"**MORAL.**—Formerly it was the custom with married people that when the woman died the man should die also, and *vice versa*. But since the time of Akenda Mbani, the custom is altered, and the husband or the wife no longer die with their partners."

From M. Du Chaillu's chapter, entitled "Physical Geography and Climate," we extract a few particulars of much interest and considerable novelty:

"Equatorial Africa from the western coast, as far as I have been, is covered with an almost impenetrable jungle. This jungle begins where the sea ceases to beat its continual waves, and how much further this woody belt extends, further explorations alone will be able to show. From my furthest point it extended eastward as far as my eyes could reach; I may, however, say that, near the banks of large river running from a north-east direction towards the south-west, prairie lands were to be seen, according to the accounts the Ashangos had received.

"This gigantic forest extends north and south of the Equator, varying in breadth from two to three degrees on each side of it."

South of the Equator, it extended much further southerly than I have been, and on the north it reached further than I travelled in my former journey. Now and then prairies looking like islands, resembling so many gems, are found in the midst of this dark sea of everlasting foliage, and how grateful my eyes met them no one can conceive, unless he has lived in such a solitude.

"Now and then prairies are seen from the sea-shore; but they do not extend far inland, and are merely sandy patches left by the sea in the progress of time.

"In this great woody wilderness man is scattered and divided into a great number of tribes. The forest, thinly inhabited by man, was still more scantily inhabited by beasts. There were no beasts of burden—neither horse, camel, donkey, nor cattle. Men and women were the only carriers of burden. Beasts of burden could not live, for the country was not well adapted for them. The only truly domesticated animals were goats and fowls—the goats increasing in number as I advanced into the interior, and the fowls decreasing.

"I was struck by the absence of those species of animals always found in great number in almost every other part of Africa. Neither lions, rhinoceroses, zebras, giraffes, nor ostriches were found, and the great variety of elands and gazelles (although found almost everywhere else in Africa) were not to be seen there. Travellers in my locality would never dream that such vast herds of game could be found on the same continent as those described by different travellers. Hence large carnivorous animals are scarce; leopards and two or three species of hyenas and jackals only being found. Little nocturnal animals are more common, but they are very difficult to get at. Reptiles abound in the forest. There are a great many species of snakes, the greater part of which are very poisonous. Some are ground-snakes, others spend part of their lives upon trees, while some are water-snakes. Among the ground-snakes one of the most to be dreaded is the *Crotophaga nasicornis*. There are several species of *Echis* and of *Atheris*; these are generally found upon trees; they are small and very venomous. A very dangerous snake is the black variety of the cobra (*Dendraspis angusticeps*). This snake is much dreaded, for, when surprised or attacked, it rises up as if ready to spring upon you. There is also a large water-snake found often in the beautiful clear water of the streams of the interior, described by Dr. Gunther under the name of *Siturophaga grayi*. I have often seen this snake coiled up and resting on the branches of trees under water.

"Lizards are also abundant in some districts, and it is amusing to watch how they prey on the insect world. Among them I noticed a night species, that lives in the houses, and which

is the great enemy of cockroaches. They are continually moving from one place to another during the night, in search of their prey. During the day they remain perfectly still, and hide themselves between the bark of trees forming the walls of the huts.

"The country is also very rich in spiders; they are of wonderful diversity of form. Some of them are so large, and their webs so strong, that birds are said to be caught in them. There are house-spiders, tree-spiders, and ground-spiders. These spiders are exceedingly useful, and rid the country of many unpleasant flies. How many times I have seen them overpower prey which seemed much stronger than themselves! The web-spiders seemed to have but a few enemies, but the house and wall-spiders, which make no web, have most inveterate enemies in the shape of two or three kinds of wasps. During the day I have seen these wasps travelling along the walls with a rapidity that astonished me, and, finally, when coming to a spider, immediately pounce upon the unfortunate insect and overpower it by the quickness of the movements of their legs, and succeed in cutting one after the other the legs of the spider close to the body, and then suck it, or fly away with it to devour it somewhere else.

"I consider some species of ants, snakes, lizards, and spiders as most useful, for they destroy a great quantity of insect and other vermin. The great moisture of the country I have visited, with its immense jungle, is well adapted for the insect world, and would prove a very rich field to a naturalist and collector who would make it his special study and business. I was surprised how closely several of them mimicked or imitated other objects; some looked exactly like the leaves on which they most generally remain; others are exactly of the colour of the bark of trees on which they crawl; while others looked exactly like dead leaves, and one or two like pieces of dead branches of trees. Dragon-flies of beautiful colour were met near the pools.

"Bats are very abundant, and I had succeeded in making a fine collection of them. They sometimes came by hundreds and spent the whole of the night flying round a tree which bore fruits they like, and the noise made by their wings sounded strangely amid the stillness which surrounded them.

"Squirrels are rather numerous, and there are a good number of species. Birds of prey and snakes are their great enemies. In 'Equatorial Africa' I described how I saw a snake charming a squirrel, and made the little creature come to him.

"There are eight species of monkeys, but they are not all found in every district. They live in troops, but when old they live generally by themselves or in pairs. Of all the Mammalian animals inhabiting the forest the monkey tribe is the most

numerous; but the poor monkey is surrounded by enemies, the greatest being man, who sets traps everywhere to catch him; then he is continually hunted by the negroes with guns or arrows; the guanien, an eagle, is also his inveterate enemy.

"The guanien is a most formidable eagle, and, in spite of all my endeavours, during my former and this last journey, I have been unable to kill one: but several times I have been startled in the forest by the sudden cry of anguish of a monkey who had been seized by this 'leopard of the air,' as the natives often call it, and then saw the bird with its prey disappear out of sight.

"One day, hunting through the thick jungle, I came to a spot covered with more than one hundred skulls of monkeys of different sizes. Some of these skulls must have been those of formidable animals, and these now and then succeeded, it appears, in giving such bites to this eagle that they disabled him. For a while I thought myself in the Valley of Golgotha. Then I saw at the top of a gigantic tree, at the foot of which were the skulls, the nest of the bird, but the young had flown away. I was told by the natives that the guanien comes and lays in the same nest year after year. When an adult specimen will be procured, it may be found to rival in size the condor of America.

"By the side of wild men roamed the apes, the chimpanzee forming several varieties. These are called by the negroes the Nschiego, Nschiego Nkengo, Nschiego Mbouve, and Kooloo Kamba, all closely allied, and I think hardly distinguishable from each other by their bony structure. Then came the largest of all, the gorilla, which might be truly called the king of the forest. They all roamed in this great jungle, which seems so well adapted to be their homes, for they live on the nuts, berries, and fruits of the forest, found in more or less number throughout the year; but they eat such a quantity of food that they are obliged to roam from place to place, and are found periodically in the same district.

"The elephant has become scarce, and recedes farther and farther every year into the fastnesses of the interior.

"Miles after miles were travelled over without hearing the sound of a bird, the chatter of a monkey, or the footstep of a gazelle, the humming of insects, the falling of a leaf; the gentle murmur of some hidden stream only came upon our ears to break the deadness of this awing silence, and disturb the grandest solitude man can ever behold—a solitude which often chilled me, but which was well adapted for the study of nature."

In his "Mission to the King of Dahome," by Captain Burton, published about two years ago, there appeared a very painful chapter on "The Negro's place in Nature," introduced by a letter

to Dr. Hunt, the founder and president of the Anthropological Society. The gallant captain put forward the theories of inalienable physical, mental, and moral inferiority of the Hamite to the Semitic families, and even argued for a heterogeneity of descent. He protested, with some pains and emphasis, that the exceptional cases quoted to prove equality were irrelevant, as being cases of men into whose negro blood the Semitic element had been transfused. Of the Dahomans, Captain Burton had the lowest possible opinion. The following is his eloquent and heartless summary:—"They are a mongrel race, and a bad. Cretan liars, Cretans at learning, cowardly, and therefore cruel; gamblers, and, consequently, cheaters; brutal, noisy, boisterous, unvenerative, and disobedient; dipsas-bitten things, who deem it 'a duty to the gods' to be drunk; a flatulent, self-conceited herd of barbarians, who endeavour to humiliate those with whom they have to deal; in fact, a slave-race—vermin, with a soul apirer."

We have no self-gratulation at appropriating the compliment implied in such a vilification of the character of the negro. We are glad to observe that the estimate of M. Du Chaillu is more discriminating, more humane, and more just. Whilst exhibiting their faults, he does not veil their virtues, nor betray any inclination to deny their claims of brotherhood. M. Du Chaillu concludes his very interesting volume by the following appeal in their favour:

"As to his future capabilities, I think extreme views have prevailed among us. Some hold the opinion that the negro will never rise higher than he is; others think that he is capable of reaching the highest state of civilisation. For my own part, I do not agree with either of these opinions.

"I believe that the negro may become a more useful member of mankind than he is at present, that he may be raised to a higher standard; but that, if left to himself, he will soon fall back into barbarism, for we have no example to the contrary. In his own country the efforts of the missionaries for hundreds of years have had no effect; the missionary goes away and the people relapse into barbarism. Though a people may be taught the arts and sciences known by more gifted nations, unless they have the power of progression in themselves, they must inevitably relapse in the course of time into their former state.

"Of all the uncivilised races of men, the negro has been found to be the most tractable and the most docile, and he possesses excellent qualities that compensate in great measure for his bad ones. We ought therefore to be kind to him and try to elevate him. That he will disappear in time from his land I have very little doubt; and that he will follow in the course of time the inferior races who have preceded him. So let us write his history."

LORD LYTTON AS A POET

ONE of the ruling tendencies in modern civilisation is to subdivide labour, and apportion to each man a particular duty. In mental labour, especially, this system is directly opposed to the best action of a healthy and vigorous organisation. The evils of universal application have been so often preached, that we have come to consider it a quite reasonable thing that our great men should be born into the world with but one faculty, which faculty we expect them, during life, to develop inordinately, and at the expense of their other powers, until one man becomes all claws, like a lobster, and another all quills, like a porcupine. We condemn one man to write poetry, and are apt to be shocked if he publishes a novel. We expect this other man to live his life in painting landscapes, and cast ridicule on him if he ventures on a treatise on dynamics. We imagine that one man is capable of only one thing, forgetting that, in early life, Homer was a respectable school teacher; that Cæsar was as proud of having invented the ablative case as of having conquered the Allobroges; that Michael Angelo was at once painter, sculptor, and poet; that Shakespeare coloured his face, and strutted, and declaimed before a lot of playgoers, in this very London where we dwell.

Granting that every human being has some special fitness for some special kind of work, we hold it, nevertheless, unreasonable and unnatural that he should neglect all things to do this work only. He ceases to have the symmetry of a man, and becomes a monstrosity. We have abundance of proof that excellence in one walk of life is not the result of exclusion from all other spheres of labour. We think no less of "Hypatia" because Mr. Kingsley has written "Andromeda." The stinging truth of "Vanity Fair" is not blunted by the fact that its author has left us several little poems, which are, in their way, almost unequalled for grace and delicate fancy; while even Mr. Carlyle—who is apt to dogmatise on the point that "all men who *speak* their thought should not sing it"—has himself given us one or two exceedingly musical lyrics.

extending over forty years, Lord Lytton should have been visited by certain thoughts which he could in no wise express in prose, and which he straightway put into such verse as he was capable of writing.

This, then, is the primary view with which we proceed to examine Lord Lytton's poetical powers. We recognise in the volume of collected poems which he published some eighteen months ago—not the result of a spasmodic effort to achieve reputation in a new field, but the natural refuge of a writer who, in the course of his varied literary career, must have found in this labour relaxation and relief. This opinion is abundantly borne out by the poems themselves. They are singularly unequal—here imaginative, suggestive, and choicely expressed; there trivial, verbose, or ridiculous in their efforts to be humorous; and they have been composed at protracted intervals. Leaving out of the question the recently-published “Lost Tales of Miletus”—which are little more than a literary experiment in the adaptation of Latin metres to English verse—we find, in this self-gathered cream of his poetical writings, poems of college-life, of middle-age, and of his latest years. It is, indeed, a pity that more careful judgment had not prompted Lord Lytton to carry his weeding a little further, and throw out certain passages which are still redolent of pompous juvenility and bad taste. Grandiloquence is the besetting sin of these pages. Certain charming little lyrics are ranged alongside productions which are simply offensive in their vapid rhetoric. It may be said generally of Sir Edward's shorter efforts, that where they are ambitious and premeditated, they fail; when they are simple and natural, they succeed. As an instance that, amongst much which bears an affectation of simplicity, true poetical feeling is still to be found in these poems, take the following verses, entitled—

THE FIRST VIOLETS.

‘ Who that has loved, knows not the tender tale
Which flowers reveal, when lips are coy to tell?
Whose youth has paused not, dreaming, in the vale
Where the rath violets dwell?

So, where they shrink along the lonely brake,
Under the leafless melancholy tree;
Nor yet the cuckoo sings, nor glides the snake,
Nor wild thyme lures the bee.

Dream not of days to come—of that Unknown,
Whither Hope wanders—maze without a clue;
Give their true witchery to the flowers;—thine own
Youth in their youth renew.

Avarice, remember when the cowslip's gold,
Lured, and yet lost its glitter in thy grasp.
Do thy hoards glad thee, more than those of old ?
Those withered in thy clasp.

From *these* thy clasp falls palsied. It was then
That thou wert rich—thy coffers are a lie;
Alas, poor fool ! Joy is the wealth of men,
And Care their penury.

Come, foiled Ambition, what hast thou desired ?
Empire and power ? O wand'rer, tempest-tost !
These once were thine, when life's gay spring inspired,
Thy soul with glories lost.

Let the flowers charm thee back to that rich time,
When golden Dreamland lay within thy chart,
When love bestow'd a realm, indeed sublime—
The boundless human heart.

Hark, hark again the tread of bashful feet !
Hark the boughs rustling round the trysting-place !
Let air again with one dear breath be sweet,
Earth fair with one dear face.

Brief-lived first flowers—first love ! The hours steal on
To prank the world in summer's pomp of hue ;
But what can flaunt beneath a fiercer sun,
Worth what we lose in you ?

Oft by a flower, a leaf, in some loved book
We mark the lines that charm us most ;—Retrace
Thy life—recall its loveliest passage—look,
Dead violets keep the place !

The poem is simple, and therefore effective ; though that Lord Lytton is not always similarly successful in a similar vein, is evidenced in his "May Song," a lyric, besides which, provokes invidious comparisons with Herrick's inimitable,

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying ;
And this same flower, that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying."

We have chosen to speak first of the smaller pieces in this volume, because they more vividly bear out what we have said regarding the author's intent. The origin of a poem is oftentimes merely the suggestion of a musical line, a sudden thought, or a stray gleam of fancy ; the power of the writer is shown in his making use of this material ; in his rendering his subsequent labour worthy of the primary inspiration, in his capacity to grasp and enlarge that which Heaven has sent him. We therefore frequently observe in a poem, a single good idea swamped in bombastic language, or destroyed by incongruous accessories, while we observe other compositions possessing every secondary requisite of a poem—a definite aim, condensed, expressive language, dramatic force and

continued interest, yet wanting that subtle essential which transfigures ordinary speech and renders it perennially beautiful. Here, again, we come upon the old distinction between the poet of impulse, and the poet of intention, between Homer in "garrulous god-innocence" telling his straightforward tale, and Samuel Rogers whipping up his mother tongue with a delirious compound, which many simple people mistook for divine nectar. Within these two extremes, however, stand the great army of our poets, receiving direct from Heaven each man his own share of sunlight, in smaller or larger proportion. Need we wonder that from time to time, men have arisen and grown famous by display of pitiable lime-light? And need we wonder that, even in the regions where we expect to meet serenest azure, we are oftentimes blinded by indisputable fog? The mischance is when we, loving to be critically definite, will declare that in such or such a degree of longitude there is nothing but fog; while in another quarter there is nothing but crystalline splendour and brilliancy of light. How is it, then, that one man starts up from some grovelling hovel, sings one clear, good song, wherein the world recognises the genuine melody of a poet, and then subsides, never in life thereafter giving further evidence of extraordinary power? The author of "Helen of Kirkconnell"—perhaps the most dramatic and perfect ballad ever written—speaks to us only in that one passionate voice; he is to us only a voice, for we know nothing of him, not even his name. Especially in that legacy of song which each successive generation, as it passes into nothingness, leaves to the universal minstrelsy of the nation, do we find such isolated gems as—

"People the hollow dark with burning stars,"

while the very existence of those who produced these gleaming jewels and placed them there in such rude setting as still survives, has become a chimera—a shadow among bygone shadows. We still hear the cry, "poeta nascitur." We hear of one of the wisest men of our time sending to a friend this laconic message, "You have no business to write poetry unless you can't help it." But we find the same writer elsewhere saying, "At bottom, clearly enough, there is no perfect poet." "A vein of poetry exists in the hearts of all men; no man is made altogether of poetry. A man that has so much more of the poetic element developed in him, as to have become noticeable, will be called Poet by his neighbours. All Poets, all men, have some touches of the Universal: no man is wholly made of that."

The most ambitious poem in Lord Lytton's volume, and that which has received most favour from the general public, is entitled "Milton." It was originally published in 1831, and is intended,

says the author "to portray the great patriot poet in the three cardinal divisions of life—Youth, Manhood, and Age. The first part is founded upon the well-known, though ill-authenticated tradition, of the Italian lady, or ladies, seeing Milton asleep under a tree in the gardens of his college, and leaving some tributary verses beside the sleeper. Taking full advantage of this legend, and presuming to infer from Milton's Italian verses (as his biographers have done before me) that in his tour through Italy he did not escape the influence of the master passion, I have ventured to connect by a single thread of romantic fiction, the segments of a poem in which narrative, after all, is subservient to description." We are inclined to think that, had this poem been composed in later life, it would have possessed more of that dramatic consonance, a knowledge of which has rendered Lord Lytton the most popular novelist of his time. In rendering narrative subservient to description, he does not necessarily err; though here and there we observe a redundancy of description which with good effect might have been considerably pruned. The pictures of Milton's life in Italy are clear and concise; and what of narrative there is in the poem is well and forcibly told. It is, however, with some relief that we come upon such a passage as the following, in which, for the time being, he leaves metaphysical teaching and ingenious picture drawing to give us the outspoken utterance of a man's best nature:

"Wildly she falter'd, starting from his breast,
 'What dost thou ask—must it all end in this?
 Art thou not happy, ingrate? Rest, O, rest;
 England has toil—Italia happiness!"
 And as she spoke, a loftier light than pride,
 Flash'd from his eye, and thus the man replied;
 'Hear and approve me. In my father's land
 Age-long have men, as heathens, bow'd the knee,
 To the dire statue with the sceptred hand,
 Which Force enthrones for Thought's idolatry.
 But now I hear the signal sound afar,
 Like the first clarion waking sleep to war,
 When slumbering armies gird a doomed town:
 Dread with the whirlwind, glorious with the light,
 Strong with the thunderbolt, comes rushing down
 TRUTH; Let the mountains reel beneath her might!
 Vigour and health, her angry wings dispense,
 And speed the storm, to clear the pestilence;
 For thus, at morn—when through the glad'ning air
 Larks rise to heaven—arise my brethren's prayer;
 For thus has Night in solemn mood—

And her great name despoiled is—Liberty !
 And now she calls me with imperial voice,
 Homeward o'er land and ocean to her cause ;
 Sworn to her service at mine own free choice,
 Shall I be recreant when the sword she draws ? ”

The story of their separation is told somewhat abruptly ; but the picture of the aged woman, long years thereafter, coming from the far south once more to gaze upon the face she had known in youth,—the meeting of the pale pilgrim with the blind and grey-haired poet—is charmingly given ; as is also that last scene, wherein she, alone and unfriended, seeks Milton's grave :

“ Veiled, and in sable widowed weeds arrayed,
 An aged woman knelt upon the stone ;
 Low as she prayed, the wailing notes were sweet,
 With the strange music of a foreign tongue.
 Thrice to that spot came feeble, feebler feet,
 Thrice on that stone were humble garlands hung.
 On the fourth day some formal hand, in scorn,
 The flowers that breathed of priestcraft cast away ;
 But the poor stranger came not with the morn,
 And flowers forbidden deck'd no more the clay.
 A heart was broken—and a spirit fled,
 Whither, let those who love and hope decide,
 But in the faith that Love rejoins the dead,
 The heart was broken ere the garland died.”

Next in point of effort, but superior in many respects to the foregoing, is the poem which opens the volume. If we remember rightly, the “ Boatman ” was originally published in *Blackwood's Magazine*, for “ the man whose name is Ebony ” has been instrumental in introducing several poets to the world since first the “ Chaldee MS.” struck terror into *Maga's* enemies. Lord Lytton has for many years been connected with that magazine, and in it has appeared many of his poetical, and certainly the finest of his prose works.

The “ Boatman ” is an allegorical poem, founded on the well-known resemblance of life to a river ; but so impressive is the measured rhythm of the piece, so wierd its shadowy, subdued scenery, and so suggestive and almost terrible its details, that we are inclined to rank it among the first of our author's poetical productions. The following stanzas are among the finest passages in this singular poem :

“ Half sleeping still, I stand among
 The silvery, trembling sedges,
 And hear the river rolling strong,
 Through mists that veil its edges.

‘ Up, Boatman, up ! the moments flee,
 As on the bank I shiver ;
 And thou must row me towards the sea ;
 Along this length of river.’

The Boatman rose, and stretched his hand—
 'Come in—thou hast far to go ;'
 And through the drowsy reeds from land,
 The boat went soft and slow ;
 Stealing and stilly, soft and slow.
 And the Boatman looked in my face and smiled :
 'Thy lids are yet heavy ; sleep on, poor child !
 Lulled by the drip
 Of the oars I dip,
 Measured and musical, sure and steady—
 Sleep by my side,
 While from home we glide ?
 And I dreamily murmur ' From home already !'

'Oh, land and leave me ! take my gold ;
 My course is closed before the sea.
 Fair on the garden mount, behold
 An angel form that becks to me !
 With her to rest, as rests the river,
 In airs which rose hues flush for ever !'

'Thou bad'st me follow a fairy, when
 An insect rose from the almond bough ;
 I did not follow thy fairy then,
 I may not halt for thine angel now.
 Never the fare whom I once receive,
 Till the voyage be over, I land or leave.
 But I'm not such a churl as I seem to be,
 And the angel may sit in my boat with thee ?
 Tinkle, tinkle—' What means that bell ?'
 'Thine angel is coming thyself to tell.'
 See her stand on the margin by which we shall glide—
 Open thine arms and she springs to thy side ?'
 'Close, close to my side,
 Oh angel ! O bride !

A fresh sun on the universe dawns from thine eyes,
 To shine evermore
 Through each change on the shore,
 And undimmed by each cloud that flits over the skies !'

Side by side thus we whisper ' Who loves loves for ever.'
 As wave upon wave to the sea runs the river,
 And the oar on the smoothness drops noiseless and steady,
 Till we start with a sigh,
 Was it she—was it I—
 Who first turned to look back on the way we had made,
 Who first saw the soft tints of the garden-land fade—
 Who first sighed—'see the rose-hue is fading already.'

' Boatman, look at the blackening cloud ;
 Put into yonder sheltered creek,
 For the lightning is bursting its ghastly shroud,
 And hark how the thunders break !
 'No storm on this river outlasts its hour ;
 As I stayed not for sun, so I stay not for shower.
 Is thy mantle too scanty to cover thy bride ?
 Or are two not as one, if they cling side to side ?'
 I gather my mantle around her form,
 And as on one bosom descends the storm.

'Look up,' said the Boatman, 'the storm is spent ;
 No storm on this river outlasts its hour ;
 And the glories that colour the world are blent
 In the cloud which gave birth to the thunder-shower.

The heaven is glad with its iris-beams,
 The earth with the sparkling dew ;
 And fresher and brighter creation seems
 For the rain that has pierced me through.

There's a change in myself, and the change is still ;
 There's a change, O my bride, in thee.
 Is it the shade from the snow-capt hill,
 Which nears as we near the sea ?
 But gone from her eye is the tender light,
 From her lip the enchanting play ;
 And all of the angel that bless my sight
 Has passed from my bride away.
 Like the fairy that dazzled my earlier sight,
 The angel has passed away.

Muttered the Boatman—' So like them all ;
 They mark the change in the earth and sky,
 Yet marvel that change should themselves befall,
 And that hearts should change with the changing eye."

The unity of aim in this poem, and its continued vehemence ending in a well-delivered climax, render it one of the most striking of Lord Lytton's productions. It is marred by no tricks of inversion, and by few forced rhymes. We meet with no instances of that desire to be epigrammatic, which so frequently reveals the absence of higher powers. The author has kept well to his subject, and we are bound to forgive those traces of reflection which are here and there introduced simply for the sake of melody.

The most dangerous ground whereon a poet can tread is that of satire. In its nature, satire, except of the most virtuous kind, is destructive of poetry. The satire of Pope is more a stern indignation, a withering invective, which seldom descends to the level of a sneer, but frequently rises into the most passionate and genuine poetry. Any one at all acquainted with Lord Lytton's career, must know that he had on several occasions endeavoured to be the censor of the age ; and that in lashing the follies of his contemporaries, he has frequently exposed himself to a somewhat bitter return of the compliment. We must do him the justice to say that these efforts were chiefly of his earlier years, when satire possesses an almost irresistible charm. It is so pleasant to fancy one's self the castigator of society, that few young writers escape the delusion ; the first process which disenchant them being generally the turning of the whip against themselves.

Not to speak of the *Siamese Twins*, a production which, in the present volume, Lord Lytton characterises righteously as "a very jejune and puerile burlesque," he published about twenty years ago a satirical poem called *The New Timon*, in which criticism of the most audacious sort was served out to his brother writers. One or two of them replied with more or less severity, and since then our author has confined his comic powers to his prose

writings. But in this volume of which we speak he has once more been tempted into his old vein, and though we are glad to observe that he has avoided the vice of contemporary criticism, nevertheless, the mere introduction of verses to which the highest praise that can be awarded is only that of smartness and epigrammatic brilliancy, is apt to provoke censure of the entire volume, and at the best is a proceeding the good taste of which is certainly open to question. We grant that there are many clever things said in these verses, ingenious antitheses, happy conceits, and occasionally a truism strikingly rendered. But this is not poetry, and besides being out of place and incongruous, such word-quibbling may prompt a rash verdict upon the whole book. The truth of the matter seems to be that Lord Lytton is not the best judge of his own poetical efforts, and in this he shares the mischance of many great men. How much more perfect would Burns's works be, had their author been able to give them proper weeding! Wordsworth is noted for his occasional relapses into unmistakable puerility; while, coming to our own day, the present Laureate, as careful an artist as ever put pen to paper, has omitted to strike out of the later editions of his poems such tawdry absurdities as "The Skipping-rope," and "The Goose." We can forgive Lord Lytton writing—

"O impotence of Genius to belie
Its glorious task—its mission from the sky!
Swift wrote this book * to wreak a ribald scorn
On aught the Man should love or Priest should mourn;
And lo, the book, from all its ends beguiled,
A harmless wonder to some happy child."

But how are we to regard such a couplet as the following :

"'Twas said, 'The child is father to the man,'
By one whose world was but the shepherd's range?"

The half-implied sneer comes with no good grace from one who has written such lines as these :

"The sky was dull, the scene was wild;
I wander'd up the mountain way;
And with me went a joyous child,
The man in thought, the child at play.
My heart was sad with many a grief,
Mine eyes with former tears were dim;
The child! a stone, a flower, a leaf,
Has each its fairy wealth for him.
From time to time, unto my side
He bounded back to show the treasure;
I was not hard enough to chide,
Nor wise enough to share his pleasure.
We paused at last—the child began
Again his sullen guide to tease;
'They say you are a learned man
So look, and tell me what are these?'"

* Gulliver's Travels.

lines which are essentially Wordsworthian in manner and tone, though without a trace of Wordsworthian genius. In a composition entitled "The Mind and the Body," Lord Lytton developes to the full his talent for smart and antithetical writing; and if we agree to regard these couplets as something quite apart from poetry, they are sufficiently pleasant and amusing. The subject is a duologue between the mind and body of a great man; though we find the great man's mind is not above a pun, nor the great man's body above certain spirituous weaknesses. Let us piously hope, however, that the latter failing was the result of a fatal exigency of rhyme, not the cold-blooded intention of the author. Body, it seems, becomes indignant at the treatment to which it is subjected by mind; and complains thereof in a series of logical and reasonable arguments. But mind admonishes body in this wise:

"View thy pains as the taxes exacted by glory;
What's this passage through life to a passage in story?
I have made thee one ache from the sole to the crown—
Be it so.

And the recompense? Priceless renown."

Unto which body replies:—

"Hang renown. Horrid thing, more malign to a body
Than that other strong poison you offered me—toddy;"

from which reproach we may gather that the conversation took place on one of those occasions when repentant nature cries aloud for soda-water. In fact, body subsequently makes some such revelation:

"Yes, the nights might be pleasant, but then—their next day!
And, as Humour and Wit should have long since found out,
The unbinder of Care is the giver of Gout.
Yet you've injured me less with good wine and good cooks,
Than with those horrid banquets you made upon books.
Every hurt my poor nerves could convey to you scorning,
Interdicted from sleep till past three in the morn'ing,
While you were devouring the trash of a college,
And my blood was made thin with crude apples of knowledge.
To dry morsels of Kant, undigested, I trace
Through the maze of my ganglions the tic in my face;
And however renowned your new theory of light is,
Its effect upon me was my chronic gastritis.

thoughtful poems in this book—"Retirement: Man's Final Choice"—the same or similar levity is allowed to intrude:—

'For all of us, the tritest, shrink reluctant from the cession
Of an atom's weight of power o'er the lives of fellow-men;
Not a Dobson quits his till, not a Jobson his profession,
Not a Jones in penny journals the sceptre of his pen."

In the smaller poems scattered throughout the volume, the unequal character of Sir Bulwer's poetical powers is most vividly seen. A pleasing specimen of these poems is that already quoted "The First Violets." They are in general quiet and reflective; possessing much smoothness of diction and felicity of expression. He is most successful, as could have been anticipated, in subjects of a polished or classic nature; when he attempts to portray rustic simplicity we are reminded of Colin in Miss Blamire's song:—

"Then Colin, too, although polite,
Has nae sma' share o' learning;
Yet stretching out his words sae tight,
They're sadly spoiled wi' darning."

The following little poem is remarkably chaste and beautiful; and is founded on the legend that when Jupiter, recognising his future cup-bearer "*in Ganymede flavo*," summoned him to his presence, the young shepherd, struck with awe and wonder, dropped the pipe whereon he had been playing to his sheep:—

GANYMEDE.

"Upon the Phrygian hill
The shepherd sate, and on his reed he played.
Sunlight and calm; noon in the dreamy glade,
Noon on the lulling rill.

He saw not, where on high
The noiseless eagle of the Heavenly King
Rested—till rapt upon the rushing wing
Into the golden sky.

When the bright Nectar Hall
And the still brows of bended gods he saw,
In the quick instinct both of shame and awe,
His hand the reed let fall.

Soul, that a thought divine
Bears into heaven—thy first ascent survey;
What charmed thee most on earth is cast away—
To soar is to resign.

We now come to what Lord Lytton terms his narrative poems. Chief among them is "Milton," of which we have already given specimens. In "Eva: A True Story," the author has lit upon a most effective tale, which is told with considerable success. Eva is loved by an idiot boy, whose father implores her to be kindly to the lad; and she, undertaking such gentle tutelage, becomes his friend and teacher. She cheers and consoles him, though as yet no ray seems to break the mental darkness in which he is shrouded.

Then comes a suitor who woos and wins the girl; and at the very moment when she is plighting her troth to the stranger, a strange, wild face appears, and the idiot lad—no more an idiot, for the passionate jealousy of love has “loosed the last link that thrall’d the thought,” gazes upon the very act which severs Eva from him for ever. The girl is married to the stranger-lover; but by-and-bye he leaves her—there is nothing heard of him until one day come dreadful tidings—a letter reveals to Eva that she is a mother but no wife, for the marriage-ceremony has been only a mockery. Her infant dies and is laid beneath the daisies; and the last scene of the little drama describes her, now bereft of reason, clinging for kindness to her former idiot lover:—

“Close by his side she loved to steal,
As if no ill could harm her there,
And when her looks his own would seek
Some memory seem’d to wake the sigh—
Strive for kind words she could not speak,
And bless him in the tearful eye.”

“The Fairy Bride” is a tale belonging to a portion of English, or rather Welsh history, with which every reader of modern poetry must now be familiar. In the legendary fables clustering around the Knights of the Round Table, several poets have found material wherewith to weave the webs of their own fancy; and it would certainly be an interesting psychological study were we to compare these rival tissues and thereby determine the mental bent of their producers. Southey, Sir Walter Scott, and Mr. Tennyson, have made the traditions of the mythical King Arthur common property; their latest transfiguration having been accomplished in the “Idylls of the King.” Instead of creating, as Mr. Tennyson has done

“his own ideal knight,
Who revered his conscience as his King;
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it;
Who loved one only, and who gave to her,—

Lord Lytton, as he himself informs us, “has represented Arthur and Guenever according to the view of their characters taken in those French romances,” (the *Fabliaux*), and adds:—“a view very different from that taken in the maturer poem of “King Arthur,” which may, perhaps, some day or other, be better known to the general reader than it is at present.” In the “Fairy Bride,” there is little departure taken from the ordinary narrative style of composition; though the description of several of the scenes is vivid and picturesque.

We have now endeavoured to point out the salient features of Lord Lytton’s poetry, as evidenced in a collection he has himself made. The conclusion to which we are irresistibly driven is that,

exists in the hearts of all men," he has not "so much more of the poetic element developed in him," as would warrant our calling him a poet in any true sense of the term. It is not impossible that his greatest ambition lies that way, despite the appearances which we have mentioned as arguing a contrary conclusion. And if this should be so—if he is dissatisfied with all he has done because he has not the power to do more—we can only recognise in the spectacle another instance of the human unrest of which no hitherto discovered Mephistophiles has been able to cure any hitherto produced Faust.

W. B.

A BACHELOR'S REVERIE

A BACHELOR dull and lonely, in this cheerless room of mine,
I sit and muse, I lie and dream, through all my leisure time;
And not alone in leisure time, but in my busiest hours,
Chin-dipt in endless cyphers, I lounge in dreamland's bowers.

And they redden all the pages, rose tint with purple blent,
Till a shrill voice at my elbow, "Has Jones' account been sent?"
Wakes me to dull reality, and makes me spur my pen,
Angrily and nervously, for the time thus lost again.

In Spring-time when the days stretch out, I read entrancing tales
Of love, of chivalry of old, of green and sunny dales;
But 'mid all the excitement, all the mystery and doubt,
There's something in the dim beyond, to which my thoughts go out.

In Summer, through my holidays, I roam in lonely dells.
I seek my want in waterfalls, in flowers, in fairy wells;
But after all my wandering, I return ungratified
With face brown as a nutmeg, but my heart unsatisfied.

And when the mellow Autumn comes, sweet reveries return,
And over bills of lading, I long for a week's sojourn
Midst some far-off Hesperides, with yellow apples hung,
Or to hear amid the golden gorse the bees Mellæan hum.

When winter's dreary nights come round, I sit and muse alone,
Or gaze out at the moonlight, and recall sweet days now gone.
Thus it is! Shall it be ever? Shall my heart ne'er attain
The happiness it thirsts for, as the parch'd soil thirsts for rain?

I've tried all known specifics for this aching of the heart,
I've soaked my brains in poetry till I hate the rhyming art,
I've read "sensation" novels, geologised, and fed
On ethics and on politics, as satisfying bread.

But my soul now loathes the sorry food, as strongly as of old
The Israelites did the manna, or the water strewn with gold;
Surely, this monastic system was never meant for man;
Or, at least, I do not take to it, and methinks I never can.

So now, in this the quiet gloom of a February eve—
As I sit and watch the fiery sparks, that die away and leave
No trace amid the ashes: my resolve is firmly fixed
To try some other state of life 'ere February next.

JAMES LEITCH.

**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

[illegible]

